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BY

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

SONGS AND SATIRES

TOWARD THE GULF

THE GREAT VALLEY

STARVED ROCK

DOMESDAY BOOK

BY
EDGAR LEE MASTERS

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TO MY FATHER

HARDIN WALLACE MASTERS

SPLENDID INDIVIDUAL OF

A PASSING SPECIES — AN AMERICAN

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DOMESDAY BOOK

DOMESDAY BOOK

Take any life you choose and study it:
It gladdens, troubles, changes many lives.
The life goes out, how many things result?
Fate drops a stone, and to the utmost shores
The circles spread.

Now, such a book were endless,
If every circle, riffle should be traced
Of any life — and so of Elenor Murray,
Whose life was humble and whose death was tragic.
And yet behold the riffles spread, the lives
That are affected, and the secrets gained
Of lives she never knew of, as for that.
For even the world could not contain the books
That should be written, if all deeds were traced,
Effects, results, gains, losses, of her life,
And of her death.

Concretely said, in brief,
A man and woman have produced this child;
What was the child's pre-natal circumstance?
How did her birth affect the father, mother?
What did their friends, old women, relatives
Take from the child in feeling, joy or pain?

What of her childhood friends, her days at school,
Her teachers, girlhood sweethearts, lovers later,
When she became a woman? What of these?
And what of those who got effects because
They knew this Elenor Murray?

Then she dies.

Read how the human secrets are exposed
In many lives because she died — not all
Lives, by her death affected, written here.
The reader may trace out such other riffles
As come to him — this book must have an end.

Enough is shown to show what could be told
If we should write a world of books. In brief
One feature of the plot elaborates
The closeness of one life, however humble
With every life upon this globe. In truth
I sit here in Chicago, housed and fed,
And think the world secure, at peace, the clock
Just striking three, in Europe striking eight:
And in some province, in some palace, hut,
Some words are spoken, or a fisticuff
Results between two brawlers, and for that
A blue-eyed boy, my grandson, we may say,
Not even yet in seed, but to be born
A half a century hence, is by those words,
That fisticuff, drawn into war in Europe,
Shrieks from a bullet through the groin, and lies
Under the sod of France.

But to return
To Elenor Murray, I have made a book
Called Domesday Book, a census spiritual
Taken of our America, or in part
Taken, not wholly taken, it may be.
For William Merival, the coroner,
Who probed the death of Elenor Murray goes
As far as may be, and beyond his power,
In diagnosis of America,
While finding out the cause of death. In short
Becomes a William the Conqueror that way
In making up a Domesday Book for us. . . .
Of this a little later. But before
We touch upon the Domesday book of old,
We take up Elenor Murray, show her birth;
Then skip all time between and show her death;
Then take up Coroner Merival — who was he?
Then trace the life of Elenor Murray through
The witnesses at the inquest on the body
Of Elenor Murray; — also letters written,
And essays written, conversations heard,
But all evoked by Elenor Murray's death.
And by the way trace riffles here and there. . . .
A word now on the Domesday book of old:
Remember not a book of doom, but a book
Of houses; domus, house, so domus book.
And this book of the death of Elenor Murray
Is not a book of doom, though showing too
How fate was woven round her, and the souls
That touched her soul; but is a house book too

Of riches, poverty, and weakness, strength
Of this our country.
                                        If you take St. Luke
You find an angel came to Mary, said:
Hail! thou art highly favored, shalt conceive,
Bring forth a son, a king for David's throne:—
So tracing life before the life was born.
We do the same for Elenor Murray, though
No man or angel said to Elenor's mother:
You have found favor, you are blessed of God,
You shall conceive, bring forth a daughter blest,
And blessing you. Quite otherwise the case,
As being blest or blessing, something like
Perhaps, in that desire, or flame of life,
Which gifts new souls with passion, strength and love. . . .
This is the manner of the girl's conception,
And of her birth:— . . .

THE BIRTH OF ELENOR MURRAY

                                        What are the mortal facts
With which we deal? The man is thirty years,
Most vital, in a richness physical,
Of musical heart and feeling; and the woman
Is twenty-eight, a cradle warm and rich
For life to grow in.
                                        And the time is this:
This Henry Murray has a mood of peace,

A splendor as of June, has for the time
Quelled anarchy within him, come to law,
Sees life a thing of beauty, happiness,
And fortune glow before him. And the mother,
Sunning her feathers in his genial light,
Takes longing and has hope. For body's season
The blood of youth leaps in them like a fountain,
And splashes musically in the crystal pool
Of quiet days and hours. They rise refreshed,
Feel all the sun's strength flow through muscles, nerves;
Extract from food no poison, only health;
Are sensitive to simple things, the turn
Of leaves on trees, flowers springing, robins' songs.

Now such a time must prosper love's desire,
Fed gently, tended wisely, left to mount
In flame and light. A prospering fate occurs
To send this Henry Murray from his wife,
And keep him absent for a month — inspire
A daily letter, written of the joys,
And hopes they have together, and omit,
Forgotten for the time, old aches, despairs,
Forebodings for the future.
What results?
For thirty days her youth, and youthful blood
Under the stimulus of absence, letters,
And growing longing, laves and soothes and feeds,
Like streams that nourish fields, her body's being.
Enriches cells to plumpness, dim, asleep,
Which stretch, expand and turn, the prototype

Of a baby newly born; which after the cry
At midnight, taking breath an hour before,—
That cry which is of things most tragical,
The tragedy most poignant — sleeps and rests,
And flicks its little fingers, with closed eyes
Senses with visions of unopened leaves
This monstrous and external sphere, the world,
And what moves in it.
So she thinks of him,
And longs for his return, and as she longs
The rivers of her body run and ripple,
Refresh and quicken her. The morning's light
Flutters upon the ceiling, and she lies
And stretches drowsily in the breaking slumber
Of fluctuant emotion, calls to him
With spirit and flesh, until his very name
Seems like to form in sound, while lips are closed,
And tongue is motionless, beyond herself,
And in the middle spaces of the room
Calls back to her.

And Henry Murray caught,
In letters, which she sent him, all she felt,
Re-kindled it and sped it back to her.
Then came a lover's fancy in his brain:
He would return unlooked for — who, the god,
Inspired the fancy? — find her in what mood
She might be in his absence, where no blur
Of expectation of his coming changed
Her color, flame of spirit. And he bought

Some chablis and a cake, slipped noiselessly
Into the chamber where she lay asleep,
And had a light upon her face before
She woke and saw him.

How she cried her joy!
And put her arms around him, burned away
In one great moment from a goblet of fire,
Which over-flowed, whatever she had felt
Of shrinking or distaste, or loveless hands
At any time before, and burned it there
Till even the ashes sparkled, blew away
In incense and in light.

She rose and slipped
A robe on and her slippers; drew a stand
Between them for the chablis and the cake.
And drank and ate with him, and showed her teeth,
While laughing, shaking curls, and flinging back
Her head for rapture, and in little crows.

And thus the wine caught up the resting cells,
And flung them in the current, and their blood
Flows silently and swiftly, running deep;
And their two hearts beat like the rhythmic chimes
Of little bells of steel made blue by flame,
Because their lives are ready now, and life
Cries out to life for life to be. The fire,
Lit in the altar of their eyes, is blind
For mysteries that urge, the blood of them
In separate streams would mingle, hurried on

By energy from the heights of ancient mountains;
The God himself, and Life, the Gift of God.

And as result the hurrying microcosms
Out of their beings sweep, seek out, embrace,
Dance for the rapture of freedom, being loosed;
Unite, achieve their destiny, find the cradle
Of sleep and growth, take up the cryptic task
Of maturation and of fashioning;
Where no light is except the light of God
To light the human spirit, which emerges
From nothing that man knows; and where a face,
To be a woman's or a man's takes form:
Hands that shall gladden, lips that shall enthrall
With songs or kisses, hands and lips, perhaps,
To hurt and poison. All is with the fates,
And all beyond us.

Now the seed is sown,
The flower must grow and blossom. Something comes,
Perhaps, to whisper something in the ear
That will exert itself against the mass
That grows, proliferates; but for the rest
The task is done. One thing remains alone:
It is a daughter, woman, that you bear,
A whisper says to her — It is her wish —
Her wish materializes in a voice
Which says: the name of Elenor is sweet,
Choose that for her — Elenor, which is light,
The light of Helen, but a lesser light

FINDING OF THE BODY

In this our larger world; a light to shine,
And lure amid the tangled woodland ways
Of this our life; a firefly beating wings
Here, there amid the thickets of hard days.
And to go out at last, as all lights do,
And leave a memory, perhaps, but leave
No meaning to be known of any man. . . .
So Elenor Murray is conceived and born.

But now this Elenor Murray being born,
We start not with her life, but with her death,
The finding of her body by the river.
And then as Coroner Merival takes proof
Her life comes forth, until the Coroner
Traces it to the moment of her death.
And thus both life and death of her are known.
This the beginning of the mystery: —

FINDING OF THE BODY

Elenor Murray, daughter of Henry Murray,
The druggist at LeRoy, a village near
The shadow of Starved Rock, this Elenor
But recently returned from France, a heart
Who gave her service in the world at war,
Was found along the river's shore, a mile
Above Starved Rock, on August 7th, the day
Year 1679, LaSalle set sail

For Michilmackinac to reach Green Bay
In the *Griffin,* in the winter snow and sleet,
Reaching " Lone Cliff," Starved Rock its later name,
Also La Vantum, village of the tribe
Called Illini.

This may be taken to speak
The symbol of her life and fate. For first
This Elenor Murray comes into this life,
And lives her youth where the Rock's shadow falls,
As if to say her life should starve and lie
Beneath a shadow, wandering in the world,
As Cavalier LaSalle did, born at Rouen,
Shot down on Trinity River, Texas. She
Searches for life and conquest of herself
With the same sleepless spirit of LaSalle;
And comes back to the shadow of the Rock,
And dies beneath its shadow. Cause of death?
Was she like Sieur LaSalle shot down, or choked,
Struck, poisoned? Let the coroner decide.
Who, hearing of the matter, takes the body
And brings it to LeRoy, is taking proofs;
Lets doctors cut the body, probe and peer
To find the cause of death.

And so this morning
Of August 7th, as a hunter walks —
Looking for rabbits maybe, aimless hunting —
Over the meadow where the Illini's
La Vantum stood two hundred years before,

FINDING OF THE BODY

Gun over arm in readiness for game,
Sees some two hundred paces to the south
Bright colors, red and blue; thinks off the bat
A human body lies there, hurries on
And finds the girl's dead body, hatless head,
The hat some paces off, as if she fell
In such way that the hat dashed off. Her arms
Lying outstretched, the body half on side,
The face upturned to heaven, open eyes
That might have seen Starved Rock until the eyes
Sank down in darkness where no image comes.

This hunter knew the body, bent and looked;
Gave forth a gasp of horror, leaned and touched
The cold hand of the dead: saw in her pocket,
Sticking above the pocket's edge a banner,
And took it forth, saw it was Joan of Arc
In helmet and cuirass, kneeling in prayer.
And in the banner a paper with these words:
"To be brave, and not to flinch." And standing there
This hunter knew that Elenor Murray came
Some days before from France, was visiting
An aunt, named Irma Leese beyond LeRoy.
What was she doing by the river's shore?
He saw no mark upon her, and no blood;
No pistol by her, nothing disarranged
Of hair or clothing, showing struggle — nothing
To indicate the death she met. Who saw her
Before or when she died? How long had death
Been on her eyes? Some hours, or over-night.

The hunter touched her hand, already stiff;
And saw the dew upon her hair and brow,
And a blue deadness in her eyes, like pebbles.
The lips were black, and bottle flies had come
To feed upon her tongue. 'Tis ten o'clock,
The coolness of the August night unchanged
By this spent sun of August. And the moon
Lies dead and wasted there beyond Starved Rock.
The moon was beautiful last night! To walk
Beside the river under the August moon
Took Elenor Murray's fancy, as he thinks.
Then thinking of the aunt of Elenor Murray,
Who should be notified, the hunter runs
To tell the aunt — but there's the coroner —
Is there not law the coroner should know?
Should not the body lie, as it was found,
Until the coroner takes charge of it?
Should not he stand on guard? And so he runs,
And from a farmer's house by telephone
Sends word to Coroner Merival. Then returns
And guards the body.

Here is riffle first:
The coroner sat with his traveling bags,
Was closing up his desk, had planned a trip
With boon companions, they were with him there;
The auto waited at the door to take them
To catch the train for northern Michigan.
He closed the desk and they arose to go.
Just then the telephone began to ring,

THE CORONER

The hunter at the other end was talking,
And told of Elenor Murray. Merival
Turned to his friends and said: " The jig is up.
Here is an inquest, and of moment too.
I cannot go, but you jump in the car,
And go — you'll catch the train if you speed up."
They begged him to permit his deputy
To hold the inquest. Merival said " no,"
And waived them off. They left. He got a car
And hurried to the place where Eleanor lay. . . .
Now who was Merival the Coroner?
For we shall know of Elenor through him,
And know her better, knowing Merival.

THE CORONER

Merival, of a mother fair and good,
A father sound in body and in mind,
Rich through three thousand acres left to him
By that same father dying, mother dead
These many years, a bachelor, lived alone
In the rambling house his father built of stone
Cut from the quarry near at hand, above
The river's bend, before it meets the island
Where Starved Rock rises.

Here he had returned,
After his Harvard days, took up the task
Of these three thousand acres, while his father

Aging, relaxed his hand. From farm to farm
Rode daily, kept the books, bred cattle, sheep,
Raised seed corn, tried the secrets of DeVries,
And Burbank in plant breeding.

Day by day,
His duties ended, he sat at a window
In a great room of books where lofty shelves
Were packed with cracking covers; newer books
Flowed over on the tables, round the globes
And statuettes of bronze. Upon the wall
The portraits hung of father and of mother,
And two moose heads above the mantel stared,
The trophies of a hunt in youth.

So Merival
At a bay window sat in the great room,
Felt and beheld the stream of life and thought
Flow round and through him, to a sound in key
With his own consciousness, the murmurous voice
Of his own soul.

Along a lawn that sloped
Some hundred feet to the river he would muse.
Or through the oaks and elms and silver birches
Between the plots of flowers and rows of box
Look at the distant scene of hilly woodlands.
And why no woman in his life, no face
Smiling from out the summer house of roses,
Such riotous flames against the distant green?

And why no sons and daughters, strong and fair,
To use these horses, ponies, tramp the fields,
Shout from the tennis court, swim, skate and row?
He asked himself the question many times,
And gave himself the answer. It was this:

At twenty-five a woman crossed his path —
Let's have the story as the world believes it,
Then have the truth. She was betrothed to him,
But went to France to study, died in France.
And so he mourned her, kept her face enshrined,
Was wedded to her spirit, could not brook
The coming of another face to blur
This face of faces! So the story went
Around the country. But his grief was not
The grief they told. The pang that gnawed his heart,
And took his spirit, dulled his man's desire
Took root in shame, defeat, rejected love.
He had gone east to meet her and to wed her,
Now turned his thirtieth year; when he arrived
He found his dear bride flown, a note for him,
Left with the mother, saying she had flown,
And could not marry him, it would not do,
She did not love him as a woman should
Who makes a pact for life; her heart was set
For now upon her music, she was off
To France for study, wished him well, in truth —
Some woman waited him who was his mate. . . .
So Merival read over many times
The letter, tried to find a secret hope

Lodged back of words — was this a woman's way
To lure him further, win him to more depths?
He half resolved to follow her to France;
Then as he thought of what he was himself
In riches, breeding, place, and manliness
His egotism rose, fed by the hurt:
She might stay on in France for aught he cared!
What was she, anyway, that she could lose
Such happiness and love? for he had given
In a great passion out of a passionate heart
All that was in him — who was she to spurn
A gift like this? Yet always in his heart
Stirred something which by him was love and hate.
And when the word came she had died, the word
She loved a maestro, and the word like gas,
Which poisons, creeps and is not known, that death
Came to her somehow through a lawless love,
Or broken love, disaster of some sort,
His spirit withered with its bitterness.
And in the years to come he feared to give
With unreserve his heart, his leaves withheld
From possible frost, dreamed on and drifted on
Afraid to venture, having scarcely strength
To seek and try, endure defeat again.

Thus was his youth unsatisfied, and as hope
Of something yet to be to fill his hope
Died not, but with each dawn awoke to move
Its wings, his youth continued past his years.
The very cry of youth, which would not cease

Kept all the dreams and passions of his youth
Wakeful, expectant — kept his face and frame
Rosy and agile as he neared the mark
Of fifty years.

But every day he sat
As one who waited. What would come to him?
What soul would seek him in this room of books?
But yet no soul he found when he went forth,
Breaking his solitude, to towns.

What waste
Thought Merival, of spirit, but what waste
Of spirit in the lives he knew! What homes
Where children starve for bread, or starve for love,
Half satisfied, half-schooled are driven forth
With aspirations broken, or with hopes
Or talents bent or blasted! O, what wives
Drag through the cheerless days, what marriages
Cling and exhaust to death, and warp and stain
The children! If a business, like this farm,
Were run on like economy, a year
Would see its ruin! But he thought, at last,
Of spiritual economy, so to save
The lives of men and women, use their powers
To ends that suit.

And thus when on a time
A miner lost his life there at LeRoy,
And when the inquest found the man was killed

Through carelessness of self, while full of drink,
Merival, knowing that the drink was caused
By hopeless toil and by a bitter grief
Touching a daughter, who had strayed and died,
First wondered if in cases like to this
Good might result, if there was brought to light
All secret things; and in the course of time,
If many deaths were probed, a store of truth
Might not be gathered which some genius hand
Could use to work out laws, instructions, systems
For saving and for using wasting spirits,
So wasted in the chaos, in the senseless
Turmoil and madness of this reckless life,
Which treats the spirit as the cheapest thing,
Since it is so abundant.

Thoughts like these
Led Merival to run for coroner.
The people wondered why he sought the office.
But when they gave it to him, and he used
His private purse to seek for secret faults,
In lives grown insupportable, for causes
Which prompted suicide, the people wondered,
The people murmured sometimes, and his foes
Mocked or traduced his purpose.

Merival
The coroner is now two years in office
When Henry Murray's daughter Elenor
Found by the river, gives him work to do

THE CORONER

In searching out her life's fate, cause of death,
How, in what manner, and by whom or what
Said Elenor's dead body came to death;
And of all things which might concern the same,
With all the circumstances pertinent,
Material or in anywise related,
Or anywise connected with said death.
And as in other cases Merival
Construed the words of law, as written above:
All circumstances material or related,
Or anywise connected with said death,
To give him power as coroner to probe
To ultimate secrets, causes intimate
In birth, environment, crises of the soul,
Grief, disappointment, hopes deferred or ruined.
So now he exercised his power to strip
This woman's life of vestments, to lay bare
Her soul, though other souls should run and rave
For nakedness and shame.

So Merival
Returning from the river with the body
Of Elenor Murray thought about the woman;
Recalled her school days in LeRoy — the night
When she was graduated at the High School; thought
About her father, mother, girlhood friends;
And stories of her youth came back to him.
The whispers of her leaving home, the trips
She took, her father's loveless ways. And wonder
For what she did and made of self, possessed

His thinking; and the fancy grew in him
No chance for like appraisal had been his
Of human worth and waste, this man who knew
Both life and books. And lately he had read
The history of King William and his book.
And even the night before this Elenor's body
Was found beside the river — this he read,
Perhaps, he thought, was reading it when Elenor
Was struck down or was choked. How strange the hour
Whose separate place finds Merival with a book,
And Elenor with death, brings them together,
And for result blends book and death! . . . He knew
By Domesday Book King William had a record
Of all the crown's possessions, had the names
Of all land-holders, had the means of knowing
The kingdom's strength for war; it gave the data
How to increase the kingdom's revenue.
It was a record in a case of titles,
Disputed or at issue to appeal to.
So Merival could say: My inquests show
The country's wealth or poverty in souls,
And what the country's strength is, who by right
May claim his share-ship in the country's life;
How to increase the country's glory, power.
Why not a Domesday Book in which are shown
A certain country's tenures spiritual?
And if great William held great council once
To make inquiry of the nation's wealth,
Shall not I as a coroner in America,
Inquiring of a woman's death, make record

Of lives which have touched hers, what lives she touched;
And how her death by surest logic touched
This life or that, was cause of causes, proved
The event that made events?

So Merival
Brought in a jury for the inquest work
As follows: Winthrop Marion, learned and mellow,
A journalist in Chicago, keeping still
His residence at LeRoy. And David Borrow,
A sunny pessimist of varied life,
Ingenious thought, a lawyer widely read.
And Samuel Ritter, owner of the bank,
A classmate of the coroner at Harvard.
Llewellyn George, but lately come from China,
A traveler, intellectual, anti-social
Searcher for life and beauty, devotee
Of such diversities as Nietzsche, Plato.
Also a Reverend Maiworm noted for
Charitable deeds and dreams. And Isaac Newfeldt
Who in his youth had studied Adam Smith,
And since had studied tariffs, lands and money,
Economies of nations.

And because
They were the friends of Merival, and admired
His life and work, they dropped their several tasks
To serve as jurymen.

The hunter came
And told his story: how he found the body,

What hour it was, and how the body lay;
About the banner in the woman's pocket,
Which Coroner Merival had taken, seen,
And wondered over. For if Elenor
Was not a Joan too, why treasure this?
Did she take Joan's spirit for her guide?
And write these words: " To be brave and not to flinch "?
She wrote them; for her father said: " It's true
That is her writing," when he saw the girl
First brought to Merival's office.

Merival

Amid this business gets a telegram:
Tom Norman drowned, one of the men with whom
He planned this trip to Michigan. Later word
Tom Norman and the other, Wilbur Horne
Are in a motor-boat. Tom rises up
To get the can of bait and pitches out,
His friend leaps out to help him. But the boat
Goes on, the engine going, there they fight
For life amid the waves. Tom has been hurt,
Somehow in falling, cannot save himself,
And tells his friend to leave him, swim away.
His friend is forced at last to swim away,
And makes the mile to shore by hardest work.
Tom Norman, dead, leaves wife and children caught
In business tangles which he left to build
New strength, to disentangle, on the trip.
The rumor goes that Tom was full of drink,
Thus lost his life. But if our Elenor Murray

Had not been found beside the river, what
Had happened? If the coroner had been there,
And run the engine, steered the boat beside
The drowning man, and Wilbur Horne — what drink
Had caused the death of Norman? Or again,
Perhaps the death of Elenor saved the life
Of Merival, by keeping him at home
And safe from boats and waters.

Anyway,
As Elenor Murray's body has no marks,
And shows no cause of death, the coroner
Sends out for Dr. Trace and talks to him
Of things that end us, says to Dr. Trace
Perform the autopsy on Elenor Murray.
And while the autopsy was being made
By Dr. Trace, he calls the witnesses
The father first of Elenor Murray, who
Tells Merival this story:

HENRY MURRAY

Henry Murray, father of Elenor Murray,
Willing to tell the coroner Merival
All things about himself, about his wife,
All things as well about his daughter, touching
Her growth, and home life, if the coroner
Would hear him privately, save on such things

Strictly relating to the inquest, went
To Coroner Merival's office and thus spoke:
I was born here some sixty years ago,
Was nurtured in these common schools, too poor
To satisfy a longing for a college.
Felt myself gifted with some gifts of mind,
Some fineness of perception, thought, began
By twenty years to gather books and read
Some history, philosophy and science.
Had vague ambitions, analyzed perhaps,
To learn, be wise.

Now if you study me,
Look at my face, you'll see some trace of her:
My brow is hers, my mouth is hers, my eyes
Of lighter color are yet hers, this way
I have of laughing, as I saw inside
The matter deeper cause for laughter, hers.
And my jaw hers betokening a will,
Hers too, with chin that mitigates the will,
Shading to softness as hers did.

Our minds
Had something too in common: first this will
Which tempted fate to bend it, break it too —
I know not why in her case or in mine.
But when my will is bent I grow morose,
And when it's broken, I become a scourge
To all around me. Yes, I've visited
A life-time's wrath upon my wife. This daughter

When finding will subdued did not give up,
But took the will for something else — went on
By ways more prosperous; but alas! poor me!
I hold on when defeated, and lie down
When I am beaten, growling, ruminate
Upon my failure, think of nothing else.
But truth to tell, while we two were opposed,
This daughter and myself, while temperaments
Kept us at sword's points, while I saw in her
Traits of myself I liked not, also traits
Of the child's mother which I loathe, because
They have undone me, helped at least — no less
I see this child as better than myself,
And better than her mother, so admire.
Also I never trusted her; as a child
She would rush in relating lying wonders;
She feigned emotions, purposes and moods;
She was a little actress from the first,
And all her high resolves from first to last
Seemed but a robe with flowing sleeves in which
Her hands could hide some theft, some secret spoil.
When she was fourteen I could see in her
The passionate nature of her mother — well
You know a father's feelings when he sees
His daughter sensed by youths and lusty men
As one of the kind for capture. It's a theme
A father cannot talk of with his daughter.
He may say, "have a care," or "I forbid
Your strolling, riding with these boys at night."
But if the daughter stands and eyes the father,

As she did me with flaming eyes, then goes
Her way in secret, lies about her ways,
The father can but wonder, watch or brood,
Or switch her maybe, for I switched her once,
And found it did no good. I needed here
The mother's aid, but no, her mother saw
Herself in the girl, and said she knew the girl,
That I was too suspicious, out of touch
With a young girl's life, desire for happiness.
But when this Alma Bell affair came up,
And the school principal took pains to say
My daughter was too reckless of her name
In strolling and in riding, then my wife
Howled at me like a tigress: whip that man!
And as my daughter cried, and my wife screeched,
And called me coward if I let him go,
I rushed out to the street and finding him
Beat up his face, though almost dropping dead
From my exertion. Well, the aftermath
Was worse for me, not only by the talk,
But in my mind who saw no gratitude
In daughter or in mother for my deed.
The daughter from that day took up a course
More secret from my eyes, more variant
From any wish I had. We stood apart,
And grew apart thereafter. And from that day
My wife grew worse in temper, worse in nerves.
And though the people say she is my slave,
That I alone, of all who live, have conquered
Her spirit, still what despotism works

Free of reprisals, or of breakings-forth
When hands are here, not there?

But to return:
One takes up something for a livelihood,
And dreams he'll leave it later, when in time
His plans mature; and as he earns and lives,
With some time for his plans, hopes for the day
When he may step forth from his olden life
Into a new life made thus gradually,
I hoped to be a lawyer; but to live
I started as a drug clerk — look to-day
I own that little drug store — here I am
With drugs my years through, drugged myself at last.
And as a clerk I met my wife — went mad
About her, and I see in Elenor
Her mother's gift for making fools of men.
Why, I can scarce explain it, it's the flesh,
But then it's spirit too. Such flaming up
As came from flames like ours, but more of hers
Burned in the children. Yes, it might be well
For theorists in heredity to think
About the matter.

Well, but how about
The flames that make the children? For this woman
Too surely ruined me and sapped my life.
You hear much of the vampire, but what wife
Has not more chance for eating up a man?
She has him daily, has him fast for years.

A man can shake a vampire off, but how
To shake a wife off, when the children come,
And you must leave your place, your livelihood
To shake her off? And if you shake her off
Where do you go? what do you do? and how?
You see 'twas love that caught me, yet even so
I had resisted love had I not seen
A chance to rise through marriage. It was this:
You know, of course, my wife was Elenor Fouche,
Daughter of Arthur, thought to be so rich.
And I had hopes to patch my fortunes up
In this alliance, and become a lawyer.
What happened? Why they helped me not at all.
The children came, and I was chained to work,
To clothe and feed a family — all the while
My soul combusted with this aspiration,
And my good nature went to ashes, dampened
By secret tears which filtered through as lye.
Then finally, when my wife's father died,
After our marriage, twenty years or so,
His fortune came to nothing, all she got
Went to that little house we live in here —
It needs paint now, the porch has rotten boards —
And I was forced to see these children learn
What public schools could teach, and even as I
Left school half taught, and never went to college,
So did these children, saving Elenor,
Who saw two years of college — earned herself
By teaching. I choke up, just wait a minute!
What depths of calmness may a man come to

As father, who can think of this and be
Quiet about his heart? His heart will hurt,
Move, as it were, as a worm does with its pain.
And these days now, when trembling hands and head
Foretell decline, or worse, and make me think
As face to face with God, most earnestly,
Most eager for the truth, I wonder much
If I misjudged this daughter, canvass her
Myself to see if I had power to do
A better part by her. That is the way
This daughter has got in my soul. At first
She incubates in me as force unknown,
A spirit strange yet kindred, in my life;
And we are hostile and yet drawn together;
But when we're drawn together see and feel
These oppositions. Next she's in my life —
The second stage of the fever — as dislike,
Repugnance, and I wish her out of sight,
Out of my life. Then comes these ugly things,
Like Alma Bell, and rumors from away
Where she is teaching, and I put her out
Of life and thought the more, and wonder why
I fathered such a nature, whence it came.
Well, then the fever goes and I am weak,
Repentant it may be, delirious visions
That haunted me in fever plague me yet,
Even while I think them visions, nothing else.
So I grow pitiful and blame myself
For any part I had in her mistakes,
Sorrows and struggles, and I curse myself

That I was powerless to help her more —
Thus is she like a fever in my life.

Well, then the child grows up. But as a child
She dances, laughs and sings. At three years springs
For minutes and for minutes on her toes,
Like skipping rope, clapping her hands the while,
Her blue eyes twinkling, and her milk-white teeth
Glistening as she gurgled, shouted, laughed —
There never was such vital strength. I give
The pictures as my memory took them. Next
I see her looking side-ways at me, as if
She studied me, avoided me. The child
Is now ten years of age; and now I know
She smelled the rats that made the family hearth
A place for scampering; the horrors of our home.
She thought I brought the rats and kept them there,
These rats of bickering, anger, strife at home.
I knew she blamed me for her mother's moods
Who dragged about the kitchen day by day,
Sad faced and silent. So the upshot was
I had two enemies in the house, where once
I had but one, her mother. This made worse
The state for both, and worse the state for me.
And so it goes. Then next there's Alma Bell.
The following year my daughter finished up
The High School — and we sit — my wife and I
To see the exercises. And that summer Elenor,
Now eighteen and a woman, goes about —
I don't know what she does, sometimes I see

Some young man with her walking. But at home,
When I come in, the mother and the daughter
Put pedals on their talk, or change the theme —
I am shut out.

And in the fall I learn
From some outsider that she's teaching school,
And later people laugh and talk to me
About her feat of cowing certain Czechs,
Who broke her discipline in school.

Well, then
Two years go on that have no memory,
Just like sick days in bed when you lie there
And wake and sleep and wait. But finally
Her mother says: "To-night our Elenor
Leaves for Los Angeles." And then the mother,
To hide a sob, coughs nervously and leaves
The room where I am, for the kitchen — I
Sit with the evening paper, let it fall,
Then hold it up to read again and try
To say to self, "All right, what if she goes?"
The evening meal goes hard, for Elenor
Shines forth in kindness for me, talks and laughs —
I choke again. . . . She says to me if God
Had meant her for a better youth, then God
Had given her a better youth; she thanks me
For making High School possible to her,
And says all will be well — she will earn money
To go to college, that she will gain strength

By helping self — Just think, my friend, to hear
Such words, which in their kindness proved my failure,
When I had hoped, aspired, when I had given
My very soul, whether I liked this daughter,
Or liked her not, out of a generous hand,
Large hearted in its carelessness to give
A daughter of such mind a place in life,
And schooling for the place.

The meal was over.
We stood there silent; then her face grew wet
With tears, as wet as blossoms soaked with rain.
She took my hand and took her mother's hand,
And put our hands together — then she said:
"Be friends, be friends," and hurried from the room,
Her mother following. I stepped out-doors,
And stood what seemed a minute, entered again,
Walked to the front room, from the window saw
Elenor and her mother in the street.
The girl was gone! How could I follow them?
They had not asked me. So I stood and saw
The canvas telescope her mother carried.
They disappeared. I went back to my store,
Came back at nine o'clock, lighted a match
And saw my wife in bed, cloths on her eyes.
She turned her face to the wall, and didn't speak.

Next morning at the breakfast table she,
Complaining of a stiff arm, said: "that satchel
Was weighted down with books, my arm is stiff —

Elenor took French books to study French.
When she can pay a teacher, she will learn
How to pronounce the words, but by herself
She'll learn the grammar, how to read." She knew
How words like that would hurt!

I merely said:
" A happy home is better than knowing French,"
And went off to my store.

But coroner,
Search for the men in her life. When she came
Back from the West after three years, I knew
By look of her eyes that some one filled her life,
Had taken her life and body. What if I
Had failed as father in the way I failed?
And what if our home was not home to her?
She could have married — why not? If a girl
Can fascinate the men — I know she could —
She can have marriage, if she wants to marry.
Unless she runs to men already married,
And if she does so, don't you make her out
As loose and bad?

Well, what is more to tell?
She learned French, seemed to know the ways of the
world,
Knew books, knew how to dress, gave evidence
Of contact with refinements; letters came
When she was here at intervals inscribed

In writing of elite ones, gifted maybe.
And she was filial and kind to me,
Most kind toward her mother, gave us things
At Christmas time. But still her way was such
That I as well had been familiar with her
As with some formal lady visiting.
She came back here before she went to France,
Staid two days with us. Once upon the porch
She turned to me and said: " I wish to honor
Mother and you by serving in the war.
You must rejoice that I can serve — you must!
But most I wish to honor America,
This land of promise, of fulfillment, too,
Which proves to all the world that men and women
Are born alike of God, at least that riches
And classes formed in pride have neither hearts,
Nor minds above the souls of those who work.
This land that reared me is my dearest love,
I go to serve the country."

Pardon me!
A man of my age in an hour like this
Must cry a little — wait till I can say
The last words that she said to me.

She put
Her arms about me, then she said to me:
" I am so glad my life and place in life
Were such that I was forced to rise or sink,
To strive or fail. God has been good to me,

Who gifted me with spirit to aspire."
I go back to my store now. In these days,
Last days, of course, I try to be a husband,
Try to be kinder to the mother of Elenor.
Death is not far off, and that makes us think.
We may be over soft or penitent;
Forgive where we should hate still, being soft;
And fade off from the wrongs, we brooded on;
And cease to care life has been badly lived,
From first to last. But none the less our vision
Seems clearer as we end this trivial life.
And so I try to be a kinder husband
To Elenor's mother.

So spoke Henry Murray
To Merival; a stenographer took down
His words, and they were written out and shown
The jury. Afterward the mother came
And told her story to the coroner,
Also reported, written out, and shown
The jury. But it happened thus with her:
She waited in the coroner's outer room
Until her husband told his story, then
With eyes upon the floor, passing her husband,
The two in silence passing, as he left
The coroner's office, spoke amid her sighs,
Her breath long drawn at intervals, looking down
The while she spoke:

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I think, she said at first,
My daughter did not kill herself. I'm sure
Someone did violence to her, your tests,
Examination will prove violence.
It would be like her fate to meet with such:
Poor child, unfortunate from birth, at least
Unfortunate in fortune, peace and joy.
Or else if she met with no violence,
Some sudden crisis of her woman's heart
Came on her by the river, the result
Of strains and labors in the war in France.
I'll tell you why I say this: First I knew
She had come near me from New York, there came
A letter from her, saying she had come
To visit with her aunt there near LeRoy,
And rest and get the country air. She said
To keep it secret, not to tell her father;
That she was in no frame of mind to come
And be with us, and see her father, see
Our life, which is the same as it was when
She was a child and after. But she said
To come to her. And so the day before
They found her by the river I went over
And saw her for the day. She seemed most gay,
Gave me the presents which she brought from France,
Told me of many things, but rather more
By way of half told things than something told

Continuously, you know. She had grown fairer,
She had a majesty of countenance,
A luminous glory shone about her face,
Her voice was softer, eyes looked tenderer.
She held my hands so lovingly when we met.
She kissed me with such silent, speaking love.
But then she laughed and told me funny stories.
She seemed all hope, and said she'd rest awhile
Before she made a plan for life again.
And when we parted, she said: " Mother, think
What trip you'd like to take. I've saved some money,
And you must have a trip, a rest, construct
Yourself anew for life." So, as I said,
She came to death by violence, or else
She had some weakness that she hid from me
Which came upon her quickly.

For the rest,
Suppose I told you all my life, and told
What was my waste in life and what in hers,
How I have lived, and how poor Elenor
Was raised or half-raised — what's the good of that?
Are not there rooms of books, of tales and poems
And histories to show all secrets of life?
Does anyone live now, or learn a thing
Not lived and learned a thousand times before?
The trouble is these secrets are locked up
In books and might as well be locked in graves,
Since they mean nothing till you live yourself.
And I suppose the race will live and suffer

As long as leaves put forth in spring, live over
The very sorrows, horrors that we live.
Wisdom is here, but how to learn that wisdom,
And use it while life's worth the living, that's
The thing to be desired. But let it go.
If any soul can profit by my life,
Or by my Elenor's, I trust he may,
And help him to it.

Coroner Merival,
Even the children in this neighborhood
Know something of my husband and of me,
Our struggle and unhappiness, even the children
Hear Alma Bell's name mentioned with a look.
And if you went about here to inquire
About my Elenor, you'd find them saying
She was a wonder girl, or this or that.
But then you'd feel a closing up of speech,
As if a door closed softly, just a way
To indicate that something else was there,
Somewhere in the person's room of thoughts.
This is the truth, since I was told a man
Came here to ask about her, when she asked
To serve in France, the matter of Alma Bell
Traced down and probed.

It being true, therefore,
That you and all the rest know of my life,
Our life at home, it matters nothing then
That I go on and tell you what I think

Made sorrow for us, what our waste was, tell you
How the yarn knotted as we took the skein
And wound it to a ball, and made the ball
So hardly knotted that the yarn held fast
Would not unwind for knitting.

Well, you know
My father Arthur Fouche, my mother too.
They reared me with the greatest care. You know
They sent me to St. Mary's, where I learned
Fine things, to be a lady — learned to dance,
To play on the piano, sing a little;
Learned French, Italian, learned to know good books,
The beauty of a poem or a tale;
Learned elegance of manners, how to walk,
Stand, breathe, keep well, be radiant and strong,
And so in all to make life beautiful,
Become the helpful wife of some strong man,
The mother of fine children. Well, at school
We girls were guarded from the men, and so
We went to town surrounded by our teachers,
And only saw the boys when some girl's brother
Came to the school to visit, perhaps a girl
Consent had of her parents to receive
A beau sometimes. But then I had no beau;
And had I had my father would have kept him
Away from me at school.

For truth to tell
When I had finished school, came back to home

They kept the men away, there was no man
Quite good enough to call. Now here begins
My fate, as you will see; their very care
To make me what they wished, to have my life
Grow safely, prosperously, was my undoing.
I had a sister named Corinne who suffered
Because of that; my father guarded me
Against all strolling lovers, unknown men.
But here was Henry Murray, whom they knew,
And trusted too; and though they never dreamed
I'd marry him, they trusted him to call.
He seemed a quiet, diligent young man,
Aspiring in the world. And so they thought
They'd solve my loneliness and restless spirits
By opening the door to him. My fate!
They let him call upon me twice a month.
He was in love with me before this started,
That's why he tried to call. But as for me,
He was a man, that's all, a being only
In the world to talk to, help my loneliness.
I had no love for him, no more than I
Had love for father's tenant on the farm.
And what I knew of marriage, what it means
Was what a child knows. If you'll credit me
I thought a man and woman slept together,
Lay side by side, and somehow, I don't know,
That children came.

But then I was so vital,
Rebellious, hungering for freedom, that

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No chance was too indifferent to put by
What offered freedom from the prison home,
The watchfulness of father and of mother,
The rigor of my discipline. And in truth
No other man came by, no prospect showed
Of going on a visit, finding life
Some other place. And so it came about,
After I knew this man two months, one night
I made a rope of sheets, down from my window
Descended to his arms, eloped in short,
And married Henry Murray, and found out
What marriage is, believe me. Well, I think
The time will come when marriage will be known
Before the parties tie themselves for life.
How do you know a man, or know a woman
Until the flesh instructs you? Do you know
A man until you see him face to face?
Or know what texture is his hand until
You touch his hand? Well, lastly no one knows
Whether a man is mate for you before
You mate with him. I hope to see the day
When men and women, to try out their souls
Will live together, learning A. B. C.'s
Of life before they write their fates for life.

Our story started then. To sate their rage
My father and my mother cut me off,
And so we had bread problems from the first.
He made but little clerking in the store,
Besides his mind was on the law and books.

These were the early tangles of our yarn.
And I grew worried as the children came,
Two sons at first, and I was far from well,
One died at five years, and I almost died
For grief at this. But down below all things,
Far down below all tune or scheme of sound,
Where no rests were, but only ceaseless dirge,
Was my heart's *de profundis,* crying out
My thirst for love, not thirst for his, but thirst
For love that quenched it. But the only water
That passed my lips was desert water, poisoned
By arsenic from his rocks. My soul grew bitter,
Then sweetened under the cross, grew bitter again.
My life lay raving on the desert sands.
To speak more plainly, sleep deserted me.
I could not sleep for thought, and for a will
That could not bend, but hoped that death or something
Would take him from me, bring me love before
My face was withered, as it is to-day.
At last the doctor found me growing mad
For lack of sleep. Why was I so, he asked.
You must give up this psychic work and quit
This psychic writing, let the spirits go.
Well, it was true that years before I found
I heard and saw with higher power, received
Deep messages from spirits, from my boy
Who passed away. And as to this, who knows? —
Surely no doctor — of this psychic power.
You may be called neurotic, what is that?
Perhaps it is the soul become so fine

It leaves the body, or shakes down the body
With energy too subtle for the body.
But I was sleepless for these years, at last
The secret lost of sleep, for seven days
And seven nights could find no sleep, until
I lay upon the lawn and pushed my head,
As a dog does around, around, around.
There was a devil in me, at one with me,
And neither to be put out, nor yet subdued
By help outside, and nothing to be done
Except to find escape by knife, or pistol,
And thus get sleep. Escape! Oh, that's the word!
There's something in the soul that says escape!
Fly, fly from something, and in truth, my friend,
Life's restlessness, however healthful it be,
Is motived by this urge to fly, escape:
Well, to go on, they gave me everything,
At last they gave me chloral, but no sleep!
And finally I closed my eyes and quick
The secret came to me, as one might find,
After forgetting how, to swim, or walk,
After a sickness, and for just two minutes
I slept, and then I got the secret back,
And later slept.

So I possessed myself.
But for these years sleep but two hours or so.
Why do I wake? The spirits let me sleep.
Oh, no it is my longing that will rest not,
These thoughts of him that rest not, and this love
That never has been satisfied, this heart

So empty all these years; the bitterness
Of living face to face with one you loathe,
Yet pity, while you hate yourself for feeling
Such bitterness toward another soul,
As wretched as your own. But then as well
I could not sleep for Elenor, for her fate,
Never to have a chance in life. I saw
Our poverty made surer; year by year
Slip by with chances slipping.

Oh, that child!
When I first felt her lips that sucked my breasts
My heart went muffled like a bird that tries
To pour its whole song in one note and fails
Out of its very ecstasy. A daughter,
A little daughter at my breast, a soul
Of a woman to be! I knew her spirit then,
Felt all my love and longing in her lips,
Felt all my passion, purity of desire
In those sweet lips that sucked my breasts. Oh, rapture,
Oh highest rapture God had given me
To see her roll upon my arm and smile,
Full fed, the milk that gurgled from her lips!
Such blue eyes — oh, my child! My child! my child!
I have no hope now of this life — no hope
Except to take you to my breast again.
God will be good and give you to me, or
God will bring sleep to me, a sleep so still
I shall not miss you, Elenor.

I go on.
I see her when she first began to walk.
She ran at first, just like a baby quail.
She never walked. She danced into this life.
She used to dance for minutes on her toes.
My starved heart bore her vital in some way.
My hope which would not die had made her gay,
And unafraid and venturesome and hopeful.
She did not know what sadness was, or fear,
Or anything but laughter, play and fun.
Not till she grew to ten years and could see
The place in life that God had given her
Between my life and his; and then I saw
A thoughtfulness come over her, as a cloud
Passes across the sun, and makes one place
A shadow while the landscape lies in light:
So quietness would come over her, with smiles
Around her quietness and sunniest laughter
Fast following on her quietness.

Well, you know
She went to school here as the others did.
But who knew that I grieved to see her lose
A schooling at St. Mary's, have no chance?
No chance save what she earned herself? What girl
Has earned the money for two years in college
Beside my Elenor in this neighborhood?
There is not one! But then if books and schooling
Be things prerequisite for success in life,
Why should we have a social scheme that clings

To marriage and the home, when such a soul
Is turned into the world from such a home,
With schooling so inadequate? If the state
May take our sons and daughters for its use
In war, in peace, why let the state raise up
And school these sons and daughters, let the home
Go to full ruin from half ruin now,
And let us who have failed in choosing mates
Re-choose, without that fear of children's fate
Which haunts us now.

For look at Elenor!
Why did she never marry? Any man
Had made his life rich had he married her.
But in this present scheme of things such women
Move in a life where men are mostly less
In mind and heart than they are — and the men
Who are their equals never come to them,
Or come to them too seldom, or if they come
Are blind and do not know these Elenors.
And she had character enough to live
In single life, refuse the lesser chance,
Since she found not the great one, as I think.
But let it pass — I'm sure she was beloved,
And more than once, I'm sure. But I am sure
She was too wise for errors crude and common.
And if she had a love that stopped her heart,
She knew beforehand all, and met her fate
Bravely, and wrote that "To be brave and not
To flinch," to keep before her soul her faith

Deep down within it, lest she might forget it
Among her crowded thoughts.

She went to the war.
She came to see me before she went, and said
She owed her courage and her restless spirit
To me, her will to live, her love of life,
Her power to sacrifice and serve, to me.
She put her arms about my neck and kissed me,
Said I had been a mother to her, being
A mother if no more; wished she had brought
More happiness to me, material things,
Delight in life.

Of course her work took strength.
Her life was sapped by service in the war,
She died for country, for America,
As much as any soldier. So I say
If her life came to any waste, what waste
May her heroic life and death prevent?
The world has spent two hundred billion dollars
To put an egotist and strutting despot
Out of the power he used to tyrannize
Over his people with a tyranny
Political in chief, to take away
The glittering dominion of a crown.
I want some good to us out of this war,
And some emancipation. Let me tell you:
I know a worse thing than a German king:
It is the social scourge of poverty,

Which cripples, slays the husband and the wife,
And sends the children forth in life half formed.
I know a tyranny more insidious
Than any William had, it is the tyranny
Of superstition, customs, laws and rules;
The tyranny of the church, the tyranny
Of marriage, and the tyranny of beliefs
Concerning right and wrong, of good and evil;
The tyranny of taboos, the despotism
That rules our spirits with commands and threats:
Ghosts of dead faiths and creeds, ghosts of the past.
The tyranny, in short, that starves and chains
Imprisons, scourges, crucifies the soul,
Which only asks the chance to live and love,
Freely as it wishes, which will live so
If you take Poverty and chuck him out.
Then make the main thing inner growth, take rules,
Conventions and religion (save it be
The worship of God in spirit without hands
And without temples sacraments) the babble
Of moralists, the rant and flummery
Of preachers and of priests, and chuck them out.
These things produce your waste and suffering.
You tell a soul it sins and make it suffer,
Spend years in impotence and twilight thought.
You punish where no punishment should be,
Weaken and break the soul. You weight the soul
With idols and with symbols meaningless,
When God gave but three things: the earth and air
And mind to know them, live in freedom by them.

Well, I would have America become
As free as any soul has ever dreamed her,
And if America does not get strength
To free herself, now that the war is over,
Then Elenor Murray's spirit has not won
The thing she died for.

So I go my way,
Back to get supper, I who live, shall die
In America as it is — Rise up and change it
For mothers of the future Elenors.

By now the press was full of Elenor Murray.
And far and near, wherever she was known,
Had lived, or taught, or studied, tongues were loosed
In episodes or stories of the girl.
The coroner on the street was button-holed,
Received marked articles and letters, some
Anonymous, some crazy. David Borrow
Who helped this Alma Bell as lawyer, friend,
Found in his mail a note from Alma Bell,
Enclosed with one much longer, written for
The coroner to read.

When Merival
Had read it, then he said to Borrow: "Read
This letter to the other jurors." So
He read it to them, as they sat one night,
Invited to the home of Merival
To drink a little wine and have a smoke,
And talk about the case.

ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

What my name is, or where I live, or if
I am that Alma Bell whose name is broached
With Elenor Murray's who shall know from this?
My hand-writing I hide in type, I send
This letter through a friend who will not tell.
But first, since no chance ever yet was mine
To speak my heart out, since if I had tried
These fifteen years ago to tell my heart,
I must have failed for lack of words and mind,
I speak my heart out now. I knew the soul
Of Elenor Murray, knew it at the time,
Have verified my knowledge in these years,
Who have not lost her, have kept touch with her
In letters, know the splendid sacrifice
She made in the war. She was a human soul
Earth is not blest with often.

First I say
I knew her when she first came to my class
Turned seventeen just then — such blue-bell eyes,
And such a cataract of dark brown hair,
And such a brow, sweet lips, and such a way
Of talking with a cunning gasp, as if
To catch breath for the words. And such a sense
Of fitness, beauty, delicacy. But more
Such vital power that shook her silver nerves,
And made her dim to others; but to me

ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

She was all sanity of soul, her body,
The instruments of life, were overborne
By that great flame of hers. And if her music
Fell sometimes into discord, which I doubt,
It was her heart-strings which could not vibrate
For human weakness, what the soul of her
Struck for response; and when the strings so failed
She was more grieved than I, or anyone,
Who listened and expected more.

Well, then
What was my love? I am not loath to tell.
I could not touch her hand without a thrill,
Nor kiss her lips but I felt purified,
Exalted in some way. And if fatigue,
The hopeless, daily ills of teaching brought
My spirit to distress, and if I went,
As oftentimes I did, to call upon her
After the school hours, as I heard her step
Responding to my knock, my heart went up,
Her face framed by the opened door — what peace
Was mine to see it, peace ineffable
And rest were mine to sit with her and hear
That voice of hers where breath was caught for words,
That cunning gasp and pause!

I loved her then,
Have loved her always, love her now no less.
I feel her spirit somehow, can take out
Her letters, photograph, and find a joy

That such a soul lived, was in truth my soul,
Must always be my soul.

What was this love?
Why only this, shame nature if you will:
But since man's body is not man's alone,
Nor woman's body wholly feminine,
A biologic truth, our body's souls
Are neither masculine nor feminine,
But part and part; from whence our souls play forth
Part masculine, part feminine — this woman
Had that of body first which made her soul,
Or made her soul play in its way, and I
Had that of body which made soul of me
Play in its way. Our music met, that's all,
And harmonized. The flesh's explanation
Is not important, nor to tell whence comes
A love in the heart — the thing is love at last:
Love which unites and comforts, glorifies,
Enlarges spirit, woos to generous life,
Invites to sacrifice, to service, clothes
This poor dull earth with glory, makes the dawn
An hour of high resolve, the night a hope
For dawn for fuller life, the day a time
For working out the soul in terms of love.
This was my love for Elenor Murray — this
Her love for me, I think. Her sacrifice
In the war I traced to our love — all the good
Her life set into being, into motion
Has in it something of this love of ours.

ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

How good is God who gives us love, the lens
Through which we see the beauty, hid from eyes
That have no love, no lens.

Then what are spirits?
Effluvia material of our bodies?
Or is the spirit all — the body nothing,
Since every atom, particle of matter
With its interstices of soul, divides
Until there is no matter, only soul?
But what is love but of the soul — what flesh
Knows love but through the soul? May it not be
As soul learns love through flesh, it may at last,
Helped on its way by flesh, discard the flesh:—
As cured men leave their crutches — and go on
Loving with spirits. For it seems to me
I must find Elenor Murray as a spirit,
Myself a spirit, love her as I loved her
These years on earth, but with a clearer fire,
Flame that is separate from fuel, burning
Eternal through itself.

And here a word:
My love for Elenor Murray never had
Other expression than the look of eyes,
The spiritual thrill of listening to her voice,
A hand clasp, kiss upon the lips at best,
Better to find her soul, as Plato says.

Too true I left LeRoy under a cloud,
Because of love for Elenor Murray — yet

Not lawless love, I write now to make clear
What love was mine — and you must understand.
But let me tell how life has dealt with me,
Then judge my purpose, dream, the quality
Of Elenor Murray judge, who in some way,
Somehow has drawn me onward, upward too,
I hope, as I have striven.

I did fear
Her safety, and her future, did reprove
Her conduct, its appearance, rather more
In dread of gossip, dread of ways to follow
From such free ways begun at seventeen,
In innocence, out of a vital heart.
But when a bud is opening what stray bees
Come to drag pollen over it, and set
Life going to the end in the fruit of life!
O, my wish was to keep her for some love
To ripen in a rich maturity.
My care proved useless — or shall I say so?
Or anyone say so? since no mind knows
What failure here may somewhere prove a gain.

There was that man who came into her life
With heart unsatisfied, bound to a woman
He wedded early. Elenor Murray's love
Destroyed this man by human measurements.
And he destroyed her, so they say. But yet
She poured her love upon him, lit her soul
With brighter flames for love of him. At last

ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

She knew no thing but love and sacrifice.
She wrote me last her life was just one pain,
Had always been so from the first, and now
She wished to fling her spirit in the war,
Give, serve, nor count the cost, win death and God
In service in the war — O, loveliest soul
I pray and pray to meet you once again!
So was her life a ruin, was it waste?
She was a prodigal flower that never shut
Its petals, even in darkness, let her soul
Escape when, where it would.

But to myself:
I dragged myself to England from LeRoy
And plunged in life, philosophies of life,
Spinoza and what not, read poetry,
Heard music too, Tschaikowsky, Wagner, all
Who tried to make sound tell the secret thing
That drove me wild in searching love. And lovers
I had one after the other, having fallen
To that belief the way is by the body.
But I was fooled and grew by slow degrees.
And then there came a wild man in my life,
A vagabond, a madman, genius — well,
We both went mad, and I smashed everything,
And ran away, threw all the world for him,
Only to find myself worn out, half dead
At last, as it were out of delirium.
And for four years sat by the sea, or made
Visits to Paris, where I met the man

I married. Then how strange! I gave myself
Wholly to bearing children, just to find
Some explanation of myself, some work
Wholly absorbing, lives to take my love.
And here I was instructed, found a step
For my poor feet to mount by. Though submerged,
Alone too much, my husband not the mate
I dreamed of, hearing echoes in my dreams
Of London and of Paris, sometimes voices
Of lovers lost and vanished; still I've found
A peace sometimes, a stay, too, in the innocence
And helplessness of children.

But you see,
In spite of all we do, however high
And fiercely mounts desire, life imposes
Repression, sacrifice, renunciation.
And our poor souls fall muddied in the ditch,
Or take the discipline and live life out.
So Elenor Murray lived and did not fail.
And so it was the knowledge of her life
Kept me in spite of failures at the task
Of holding to my self.

These two months passed
I found I had not killed desire — found
Among a group a chance to try again
For happiness, but knew it was not there.
Then to my children I came back and said:
" Free once again through suffering." So I prayed:

ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

" Come to me flame of spirit, fire of worship,
Bright fire of song; if I but be myself,
Work through my fate, you shall be mine at last." . . .
Then was it that I heard from Elenor Murray —
Such letters, such outpourings of herself!
Poor woman leaving love that could not be
More than it was; how wise she was to fly,
And use that love for service, as she did;
Extract its purest essence for the war,
And ease death with it, merging love and death
Into that mystic union, seen at last
By Elenor Murray.

When I heard she came
All broken from the war, and died somehow
There by the river, then she seemed to me
More near — I seemed to feel her; little zephyrs
Blowing about my face, when I sat looking
Over the sea in my rose bower, seemed
The exhalation of her soul that caught
Its breath for words. I see her in my dreams —
O, my pure soul, what have you been to me,
What must you be hereafter!

But my friend,
And I must call you friend, whose strength in life
Drives you to find economies of spirit,
And save the waste of spirit, you must find
Whatever waste there was of Elenor Murray
Of love or faith, or time, or strength, great gain

In spite of early chances, father, mother,
Too loveless, negligent, or ignorant;
Her mother instinct never blessed with children.
I sometimes think no life is without use —
For even weeds that sow themselves, frost reaped
And matted on the ground, enrich the soil,
Or feed some life. Our eyes must see the end
Of what these growths are for, before we say
Where waste is and where gain.

Coroner Merival woke to scan the *Times,*
And read the story of the suicide
Of Gregory Wenner, circle big enough
From Elenor Murray's death, but unobserved
Of Merival, until he heard the hint
Of Dr. Trace, who made the autopsy,
That Gregory Wenner might have caused the death
Of Eleanor Murray, or at least was near
When Elenor Murray died. Here is the story
Worked out by Merival as he went about
Unearthing secrets, asking here and there
What Gregory Wenner was to Elenor Murray.
The coroner had a friend who was the friend
Of Mrs. Wenner. Acting on the hint
Of Dr. Trace he found this friend and learned
What follows here of Gregory Wenner, then
What Mrs. Wenner learned in coming home
To bury Gregory Wenner. What he learned
The coroner told the jury. Here's the life
Of Gregory Wenner first:

GREGORY WENNER

Gregory Wenner's brother married the mother
Of Alma Bell, the daughter of a marriage
The mother made before. Kinship enough
To justify a call on Wenner's power
When Alma Bell was face to face with shame.
And Gregory Wenner went to help the girl,
And for a moment looked on Elenor Murray
Who left the school-room passing through the hall,
A girl of seventeen. He left his business
Of massing millions in the city, to help
Poor Alma Bell, and three years afterward
In the Garden of the Gods he saw again
The face of Elenor Murray — what a fate
For Gregory Wenner!

But when Alma Bell
Wrote him for help his mind was roiled with cares:
A money magnate had signed up a loan
For half a million, to which Wenner added
That much beside, earned since his thirtieth year,
Now forty-two, with which to build a block
Of sixteen stories on a piece of ground
Leased in the loop for nine and ninety years.
But now a crabbed miser, much away,
Following the sun, and reached through agents, lawyers,
Owning the land next to the Wenner land,
Refused to have the sixteen story wall

Adjoin his wall, without he might select
His son-in-law as architect to plan
The sixteen-story block of Gregory Wenner.
And Gregory Wenner caught in such a trap,
The loan already bargained for and bound
In a hard money lender's giant grasp,
Consented to the terms, let son-in-law
Make plans and supervise the work.

Five years
Go by before the evil blossoms fully;
But here's the bud: Gregory Wenner spent
His half-a-million on the building, also
Four hundred thousand of the promised loan,
Made by the money magnate — then behold
The money magnate said: "You cannot have
Another dollar, for the bonds you give
Are scarcely worth the sum delivered now
Pursuant to the contract. I have learned
Your architect has blundered, in five years
Your building will be leaning, soon enough
It will be wrecked by order of the city."
And Gregory Wenner found he spoke the truth.
But went ahead to finish up the building,
And raked and scraped, fell back on friends for loans,
Mortgaged his home for money, just to finish
This sixteen-story building, kept a hope
The future would reclaim him.

Gregory Wenner
Who seemed so powerful in his place in life

Had all along this cancer in his life:
He owned the building, but he owed the money,
And all the time the building took a slant,
By just a little every year. And time
Made matters worse for him, increased his foes
As he stood for the city in its warfares
Against the surface railways, telephones;
And earned thereby the wrath of money lenders,
Who made it hard for him to raise a loan,
Who needed loans habitually. Besides
He had the trouble of an invalid wife
Who went from hospitals to sanitariums,
And traveled south, and went in search of health.

Now Gregory Wenner reaches forty-five,
He's fought a mighty battle, but grows tired.
The building leans a little more each year.
And money, as before, is hard to get.
And yet he lives and keeps a hope.

At last
He does not feel so well, has dizzy spells.
The doctor recommends a change of scene.
And Gregory Wenner starts to see the west.
He visits Denver. Then upon a day
He walks about the Garden of the Gods,
And sees a girl who stands alone and looks
About the Garden's wonders. Then he sees
The girl is Elenor Murray, who has grown
To twenty-years, who looks that seventeen

When first he saw her. He remembers her,
And speaks of Alma Bell, that Alma Bell
Is kindred to him. Where is Alma Bell,
He has not heard about her in these years?
And Elenor Murray colors, and says: " Look,
There is a white cloud on the mountain top."
And thus the talk commences.

Elenor Murray
Shows forth the vital spirit that is hers.
She dances on her toes and crows in wonder,
Flings up her arms in rapture. What a world
Of beauty and of hope! For not her life
Of teaching school, a school of Czechs and Poles
There near LeRoy, since she left school and taught,
These two years now, nor arid life at home,
Her father sullen and her mother saddened;
Nor yet that talk of Alma Bell and her
That like a corpse's gas has scented her,
And made her struggles harder in LeRoy —
Not these have quenched her flame, or made it burn
Less brightly. Though at last she left LeRoy
To fly old things, the dreary home, begin
A new life teaching in Los Angeles.
Gregory Wenner studies her and thinks
That Alma Bell was right to reprimand
Elenor Murray for her reckless ways
Of strolling and of riding. And perhaps
Real things were back of ways to be construed
In innocence or wisdom — for who knows?

His thought ran. Such a pretty face, blue eyes,
And such a buoyant spirit.

So they wandered
About the Garden of the Gods, and took
A meal together at the restaurant.
And as they talked, he told her of himself,
About his wife long ill, this trip for health —
She sensed a music sadness in his soul.
And Gregory Wenner heard her tell her life
Of teaching, of the arid home, the shadow
That fell on her at ten years, when she saw
The hopeless, loveless life of father, mother.
And his great hunger, and his solitude
Reached for the soothing hand of Elenor Murray,
And Elenor Murray having life to give
By her maternal strength and instinct gave.
The man began to laugh, forgot his health,
The leaning building, and the money lenders,
And found his void of spirit growing things —
He loved this girl. And Elenor Murray seeing
This strong man with his love, and seeing too
How she could help him, with that venturesome
And prodigal emotion which was hers
Flung all herself to help him, being a soul
Who tried all things in courage, staked her heart
On good to come.

They took the train together.
They stopped at Santa Cruz, and on the rocks

Heard the Pacific dash himself and watched
The moon upon the water, breathed the scent
Of oriental flowerings. There at last
Under the spell of nature Gregory Wenner
Bowed down his head upon his breast and shook
For those long years of striving and of haggling,
And for this girl, but mostly for a love
That filled him now. And when he spoke again
Of his starved life, his homeless years, the girl,
Her mind resolved through thinking she could serve
This man and bring him happiness, but with heart
Flaming to heaven with the miracle
Of love for him, down looking at her hands
Which fingered nervously her dress's hem,
Said with that gasp which made her voice so sweet:
" Do what you will with me, to ease your heart
And help your life."

And Gregory Wenner shaken,
Astonished and made mad with ecstasy
Pressed her brown head against his breast and wept.
And there at Santa Cruz they lived a week,
Till Elenor Murray went to take her school,
He to the north en route for home.

Five years
Had passed since then. And on this day poor Wenner
Looks from a little office at his building
Visibly leaning now, the building lost,
The bonds foreclosed; this is the very day

GREGORY WENNER

A court gives a receiver charge of it.
And he, these several months reduced to deals
In casual properties, in trivial trades,
Hard pressed for money, has gone up and down
Pursuing prospects, possibilities,
Scanning each day financial sheets and looking
For clues to lead to money. And he finds
His strength and hope not what they were before.
His wife is living on, no whit restored.
And Gregory Wenner thinks, would they not say
I killed myself because I lost my building,
If I should kill myself, and leave a note
That business worries drove me to the deed,
My building this day taken, a receiver
In charge of what I builded out of my dream.
And yet he said to self, that would be false:
It's Elenor Murray's death that makes this life
So hard to bear, and thoughts of Elenor Murray
Make life a torture. First that I had to live
Without her as my wife, and next the fact
That I have taken all her life's thought, ruined
Her chance for home and marriage; that I have seen
Elenor Murray struggle in the world,
And go forth to the war with just the thought
To serve, if it should kill her.

Then his mind
Ran over these five years when Elenor Murray
Throughout gave such devotion, constant thought,
Filled all his mind and heart, and kept her voice

Singing or talking in his memory's ear,
In absence with long letters, when together
With passionate utterances of love. The girl
Loved Gregory Wenner, but the girl had found
A comfort for her spiritual solitude,
And got a strength in taking Wenner's strength.
For at the last one soul lives on another.
And Elenor Murray could not live except
She had a soul to live for, and a soul
On which to pour her passion, taking back
The passion of that soul in recompense.
Gregory Wenner served her power and genius
For giving and for taking so to live,
Achieve and flame; and found them in some moods
Somehow demoniac when his spirits sank,
And drink was all that kept him on his feet.
And so when Elenor Murray came to him
And said this life of teaching was too much,
Could not be longer borne, he thought the time
Had come to end the hopeless love. He raised
The money by the hardest means to pay
Elenor Murray's training as a nurse,
By this to set her free from teaching school,
And then he set about to crush the girl
Out of his life.

For Gregory Wenner saw
Between this passion and his failing thought,
And gray hairs coming, fortune slip like sand.
And saw his mind diffuse itself in worries,

In longing for her: found himself at times
Too much in need of drink, and shrank to see
What wishes rose that death might take his wife,
And let him marry Elenor Murray, cure
His life with having her beside him, dreaming
That somehow Elenor Murray could restore
His will and vision, by her passion's touch,
And mother instinct make him whole again.
But if he could not have her for his wife,
And since the girl absorbed him in this life
Of separation which made longing greater,
Just as it lacked the medium to discharge
The great emotion it created, Wenner
Caught up his shreds of strength to crush her out
Of his life, told her so, when he had raised
The money for her training. For he saw
How ruin may overtake a man, and ruin
Pass by the woman, whom the world would judge
As ruined long ago, But look, he thought,
I pity her, not for our sin, if it be,
But that I have absorbed her life; and yet
The girl is mastering life, while I fall down.
She has absorbed me, if the wrong lies here.
And thus his thought went round.

And Elenor Murray
Accepted what he said and went her way
With words like these: " My love and prayers are yours
While life is with us." Then she turned to study,
And toiled each day till night brought such fatigue

That sleep fell on her. Was it to forget?
And meanwhile she embraced the faith and poured
Her passion driven by a rapturous will
Into religion, trod her path in silence,
Save for a card at Christmas time for him,
Sometimes a little message from some place
Whereto her duty called her.

Gregory Wenner
Stands at the window of his desolate office,
And looks out on his sixteen-story building
Irrevocably lost this day. His mind runs back
To that day in the Garden of the Gods,
That night at Santa Cruz, and then his eyes
Made piercing sharp by sorrow cleave the clay
That lies upon the face of Elenor Murray,
And see the flesh of her the worms have now.
How strange, he thinks, to flit into this life
Singing and radiant, to suffer, toil,
To serve in the war, return to girlhood's scenes,
To die, to be a memory for a day,
Then be forgotten. O, this life of ours.
Why is not God ashamed for graveyards, why
So thoughtless of our passion he lets play
This tragedy.

And Gregory Wenner thought
About the day he stood here, even as now
And heard a step, a voice, and looked around
Saw Elenor Murray, felt her arms again,

Her kiss upon his cheek, and saw her face
As light was beating on it, heard her gasp
In ecstasy for going to the war,
To which that day she gave her pledge. And heard
Her words of consecration. Heard her say,
As though she were that passionate Heloise
Brought into life again: "All I have done
Was done for love of you, all I have asked
Was only you, not what belonged to you.
I did not hope for marriage or for gifts.
I have not gratified my will, desires,
But yours I sought to gratify. I have longed
To be yours wholly, I have kept for self
Nothing, have lived for you, have lived for you
These years when you thought best to crush me out.
And now though there's a secret in my heart,
Not wholly known to me, still I can know it
By seeing you again, I think, by touching
Your hand again. Your life has tortured me,
Both for itself, and since I could not give
Out of my heart enough to make your life
A way of peace, a way of happiness."

Then Gregory Wenner thought how she looked down
And said: "Since I go to the war, would God
Look with disfavor on us if you took me
In your arms wholly once again? My friend,
Not with the thought to leave me soon, but sleeping
Like mates, as birds do, making sleep so sweet
Close to each other as God means we should.

I mingle love of God with love of you,
And in the night-time I can pray for you
With you beside me, find God closer then.
Who knows, you may take strength from such an hour."
Then Gregory Wenner lived that night again,
And the next morning when she rose and shook,
As it were night gathered dew upon fresh wings,
The vital water from her glowing flesh.
And shook her hair out, laughed and said to him:
"Courage and peace, my friend." And how they passed
Among the multitude, when he took her hand
And said farewell, and hastened to this room
To seek for chances in another day,
And never saw her more.

And all these thoughts
Coming on Gregory Wenner swept his soul
Till it seemed like a skiff in mid-sea under
A sky unreckoning, where neither bread,
Nor water, save salt water, were for lips.
And over him descended a blank light
Of life's futility, since now this hour
Life dropped the mask and showed him just a skull.
And a strange fluttering of the nerves came on him,
So that he clutched the window frame, lest he
Spring from the window to the street below.
And he was seized with fear that said to fly,
Go somewhere, find some one, so to draw out
This madness which was one with him and in him,
And which some one in pity must relieve,

Something must cure. And in this sudden horror
Of self, this ebbing of the tides of life,
Leaving his shores to visions, where he saw
Horrible creatures stir amid the slime,
Gregory Wenner hurried from the room
And walked the streets to find his thought again
Wherewith to judge if he should kill himself
Or look to find a path in life once more.

And Gregory Wenner sitting in his club
Wrote to his brother thus: "I cannot live
Now that my business is so tangled up,
Bury my body by my father's side."
Next day the papers headlined Gregory Wenner:
"Loss of a building drives to suicide."

Elenor Murray's death kills Gregory Wenner
And Gregory Wenner dying make a riffle
In Mrs. Wenner's life — reveals to her
A secret long concealed:—

MRS. GREGORY WENNER

Gregory Wenner's wife was by the sea
When Gregory Wenner killed himself, half sick
And half malingering, and otiose.
She wept, sent for a doctor to be braced,
Induced a friend to travel with her west

To bury Gregory Wenner; did not know
That Gregory Wenner was in money straits
Until she read the paper, or had lost
His building in the loop. The man had kept
His worries from her ailing ears, was glad
To keep her traveling, or taking cures.

She came and buried Gregory Wenner; found
His fortune just a shell, the building lost,
A little money in the bank, a store
Far out on Lake Street, forty worthless acres
In northern Indiana, twenty lots
In some Montana village. Here she was,
A widow, penniless, an invalid.
The crude reality of things awoke
A strength she did not dream was hers. And then
She went to Gregory Wenner's barren office
To collect the things he had, get in his safe
For papers and effects.

She had to pay
An expert to reveal the combination,
And throw the bolts. And there she sat a day,
And emptied pigeon holes and searched and read.
And in one pigeon hole she found a box,
And in the box a lock of hair wrapped up
In tissue paper, fragrant powder lying
Around the paper — in the box a card
With woman's writing on it, just the words
" For my beloved "; but no name or date.

MRS. GREGORY WENNER

Who was this woman mused the widow there?
She did not know the name. She did not know
Her eyes had seen this Elenor Murray once
When Elenor Murray came with Gregory Wenner
To dinner at his home to face the wife.
For Elenor Murray in a mood of strength,
After her confirmation and communion,
Had said to Gregory Wenner: " Now the end
Has come to this, our love, I think it best
If she should ever learn I am the woman
Who in New York spent summer days with you,
And later in Chicago, in that summer,
She will remember what my eyes will show
When we stand face to face, and I give proof
That I am changed, repentant."

For the wife
Had listened to a friend who came to tell
She saw this Gregory Wenner in New York
From day to day in gardens and cafes,
And by the sea romancing with a girl.
And later Mrs. Wenner found a book,
Which Gregory Wenner cherished — with the words
Beloved, and the date. And now she knew
The hand that wrote the card here in this box,
The hand that wrote the inscription in the book
Were one — but still she did not know the woman.
No doubt the woman of that summer's flame,
Whom Gregory Wenner promised not to see
When she brought out the book and told him all

She learned of his philandering in New York.
And Elenor Murray's body was decaying
In darkness, under earth there at LeRoy
While Mrs. Wenner read, and did not know
The hand that wrote the card lay blue and green,
Half hidden in the foldings of the shroud,
And all that country stirred for Elenor Murray,
Of which the widow absent in the east
Had never heard.

And Mrs. Wenner found
Beside the box and lock of hair three letters,
And sat and read them. Through her eyes and brain
This meaning and this sound of blood and soul,
Like an old record with a diamond needle.
Passed music like:—

"The days go swiftly by
With study and with work. I am too tired
At night to think. I read anatomy,
Materia medica and other things,
And do the work an undergraduate
Is called upon to do. And every week
I spend three afternoons with the nuns and sew,
And care for children of the poor whose mothers
Are earning bread away. I go to church
And talk with Mother Janet. And I pray
At morning and at night for you, and ask
For strength to live without you and for light
To understand why love of you is mine,

And why you are not mine, and whether God
Will give you to me some day if I prove
My womanhood is worthy of you, dear.
And sometimes when our days of bliss come back
And flood me with their warmth and blinding light
I take my little crucifix and kiss it,
And plunge in work to take me out of self,
Some service to another. So it is,
This sewing and this caring for the children
Stills memory and gives me strength to live,
And pass the days, go on. I shall not draw
Upon your thought with letters, still I ask
Your thought of me sometimes. Would it be much
If once a year you sent me a bouquet
To prove to me that you remember, sweet,
Still cherish me a little, give me faith
That in this riddle world there is a hand,
Which spite of separation, thinks and touches
Blossoms that I touch afterward? Dear heart,
I have starved out and killed that reckless mood
Which would have taken you and run away.
Oh, if you knew that this means killing, too,
The child I want — our child. You have a cross
No less than I, beloved, even if love
Of me has passed and eased the agony
I thought you knew — your cross is heavy, dear,
Bound, but not wedded to her, never to know
The life of marriage with her. Yet be brave,
Be noble, dear, be always what God made you,
A great heart, patient, gentle, sacrificing,

Bring comfort to her tedious days, forbear
When she is petulant, for if you do,
I know God will reward you, give you peace.
I pray for strength for you, that never again
May you distress her as you did, I did
When she found there was someone. Lest she know
Destroy this letter, all I ever write,
So that her mind may never fix itself
Upon a definite person, on myself.
But still remaining vague may better pass
To lighter shadows, nothingness at last.
I try to think I sinned, have so confessed
To get forgiveness at my first communion.
And yet a vestige of a thought in me
Will not submit, confess the sin. Well, dear,
You can awake at midnight, at the pause
Of duty in the day, merry or sad,
Light hearted or discouraged, if you chance,
To think of me, remember I send prayers
To God for you each day — oh may His light
Shine on your face!"

So Widow Wenner read,
And wondered of the writer, since no name
Was signed; and wept a little, dried her eyes
And flushed with anger, said, "adulteress,
Adulteress who played the game of pity,
And wove about my husband's heart the spell
Of masculine sympathy for a sorrowing woman,
A trick as old as Eden. And who knows

But all the money went here in the end?
For if a woman plunges from her aim
To piety, devotion such as this,
She will plunge back to sin, unstable heart,
That swings from self-denial to indulgence
And spends itself in both."

Then Widow Wenner
Took up the second letter:

"I have signed
To go to France to-day. I wrote you once
I planned to take the veil, become a nun.
But now the war has changed my thought. I see
In service for my country fuller life,
More useful sacrifice and greater work
Than ever I could have, being a nun.
The cause is so momentous. Think, my dear,
This woman who still thinks of you will be
A factor in this war for liberty,
A soldier serving soldiers, giving strength,
Health, hope and spirit to the soldier boys.
Who fall, must be restored to fight again.
I've thrown my soul in this, am all aflame.
You should have seen me when I took the oath,
And raised my hand and pledged my word to serve,
Support the law. I want to think of you
As proud of me for doing this — be proud,
Be grateful, too, that I have strength and will
To give myself to this. And if it chance,

As almost I am hoping, that the work
Should break me, sweep me under, think of me
As one who died for country, as I shall
As truly as the soldiers slain in battle.
I leave to-morrow, will be at a camp
Some weeks before I sail. I telephoned you
This morning twice, they said you would return
By two-o'clock at least. I write instead.
But I shall come to see you, if I can
Sometime this afternoon, and if I don't,
This letter then must answer. Peace be with you.
To-day I'm very happy. Write to me,
Or if you do not think it best, all right,
I'll understand. Before I sail I'll send
A message to you — for the time farewell."

Then Widow Wenner read the telegram
The third and last communication: " Sail
To-day, to-morrow, very soon, I know.
My memories of you are happy ones.
A fond adieu." This telegram was signed
By Elenor Murray. Widow Wenner knew
The name at last, sat petrified to think
This was the girl who brazened through the dinner
Some years ago when Gregory Wenner brought
This woman to his home —" the shameless trull,"
Said Mrs. Wenner, " harlot, impudent jade,
To think my husband is dead, would she were dead —
I could be happy if I knew a bomb
Or vile disease had got her." Then she looked

In other pigeon holes, and found in one
A photograph of Elenor Murray, knew
The face that looked across the dinner table.
And in the pigeon hole she found some verses
Clipped from a magazine, and tucked away
The letters, verses, telegram in her bag,
Closed up the safe and left.

Next day at breakfast
She scanned the morning *Times,* her eyes were wide
For reading of the Elenor Murray inquest.
" Well, God is just," she murmured, " God is just."

All this was learned of Gregory Wenner. Even
If Gregory Wenner killed the girl, the man
Was dead now. Could he kill her and return
And kill himself? The coroner had gone,
The jury too, to view the spot where lay
Elenor Murray's body. It was clear
A man had walked here. Was it Gregory Wenner?
The hunter who came up and found the body?
This hunter was a harmless, honest soul
Could not have killed her, passed the grill of questions
From David Borrow, skilled examiner,
The coroner, the jurors. But meantime
If Gregory Wenner killed this Elenor Murray
How did he do it? Dr. Trace has made
His autopsy and comes and makes report
To the coroner and the jury in these words:—

DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

I cannot tell you, Coroner, the cause
Of death of Elenor Murray, not until
My chemical analysis is finished.
Here is the woman's heart sealed in this jar,
I weighed it, weight nine ounces, if she had
A hemolysis, cannot tell you now
What caused the hemolysis. Since you say
She took no castor oil, that you can learn
From Irma Leese, or any witness, still
A chemical analysis may show
The presence of ricin,— and that she took
A dose of oil not pure. Her throat betrayed
Slight inflammation; but in brief, I wait
My chemical analysis.

Let's exclude
The things we know and narrow down the facts.
She lay there by the river, death had come
Some twenty hours before. No stick or stone,
No weapon near her, bottle, poison box,
No bruise upon her, in her mouth no dust,
No foreign bodies in her nostrils, neck
Without a mark, no punctures, cuts or scars
Upon her anywhere, no water in lungs,
No mud, sand, straws or weeds in hands, the nails
Clean, as if freshly manicured.

DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

Again
No evidence of rape. I first examined
The genitals *in situ,* found them sound.
The girl had lived, was not a virgin, still
Had temperately indulged, and not at all
In recent months, no evidence at all
Of conjugation willingly or not,
The day of death. But still I lifted out
The ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus,
The vagina and vulvae. Opened up
The mammals, found no milk. No pregnancy
Existed, sealed these organs up to test
For poison later, as we doctors know
Sometimes a poison's introduced *per vaginam.*

I sealed the brain up too, shall make a test
Of blood and serum for urea; death
Comes suddenly from that, you find no lesion,
Must take a piece of brain and cut it up,
Pour boiling water on it, break the brain
To finer pieces, pour the water off,
Digest the piece of brain in other water,
Repeat four times, the solutions mix together,
Dry in an oven, treat with ether, at last
The residue put on a slide of glass
With nitric acid, let it stand awhile,
Then take your microscope — if there's urea
You'll see the crystals — very beautiful!
A cobra's beautiful, but scarce can kill
As quick as these.

Likewise I have sealed up
The stomach, liver, kidneys, spleen, intestines,
So many poisons have no microscopic
Appearance that convinces, opium,
Hyoscyamus, belladonna fool us;
But as the stomach had no inflammation,
It was not chloral, ether took her off,
Which we can smell, to boot. But I can find
Strychnia, if it killed her; though you know
That case in England sixty years ago,
Where the analysis did not disclose
Strychnia, though they hung a man for giving
That poison to a fellow.

To recur
I'm down to this: Perhaps a hemolysis —
But what produced it? If I find no ricin
I turn to streptococcus, deadly snake,
Or shall I call him tiger? For I think
The microscopic world of living things
Is just a little jungle, filled with tigers,
Snakes, lions, what you will, with teeth and claws,
The perfect miniatures of these monstrous foes.
Sweet words come from the lips and tender hands
Like Elenor Murray's, minister, nor know
The jungle has been roused in throat or lungs;
And shapes venene begin to crawl and eat
The ruddy apples of the blood, eject
Their triple venomous excreta in
The channels of the body.

DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

There's the heart,
Which may be weakened by a streptococcus.
But if she had a syncope and fell
She must have bruised her body or her head.
And if she had a syncope, was held up,
Who held her up? That might have cost her life:
To be held up in syncope. You know
You lay a person down in syncope,
And oftentimes the heart resumes its beat.
Perhaps she was held up until she died,
Then laid there by the river, so no bruise.
So many theories come to me. But again,
I say to you, look for a man. Run down
All clues of Gregory Wenner. He is dead —
Loss of a building drives to suicide —
The papers say, but still it may be true
He was with Elenor Murray when she died,
Pushed her, we'll say, or struck her in a way
To leave no mark, a tap upon the heart
That shocked the muscles more or less obscure
That bind the auricles and ventricles,
And killed her. Then he flies away in fear,
Aghast at what he does, and kills himself.
Look for a man, I say. It must be true,
She went so secretly to walk that morning
To meet a man — why would she walk alone?

So while you hunt the man, I'll look for ricin,
And with my chemicals end up the search.
I never saw a heart more beautiful,

Just look at it. We doctors all agreed
This Elenor Murray might have lived to ninety
Except for jungles, poison, sudden shock.
I take my bottle with the heart of Elenor
And go about my way. It beat in France,
It beat for France and for America,
But what is truer, somewhere was a man
For whom it beat!

When Irma Leese, the Aunt of Elenor Murray,
Appeared before the coroner she told
Of Elenor Murray's visit, of the morning
She left to walk, was never seen again.
And brought the coroner some letters sent
By Elenor from France. What follows now
Is what the coroner, or the jury heard
From Irma Leese, from letters drawn — beside
The riffle that the death of Elenor Murray
Sent round the life of Irma Leese, which spread
To Tokio and touched a man, the son
Of Irma Leese's sister, dead Corinne,
The mother of this man in Tokio.

IRMA LEESE

Elenor Murray landing in New York,
After a weary voyage, none too well,
Staid in the city for a week and then

IRMA LEESE

Upon a telegram from Irma Leese,
Born Irma Fouche, her aunt who lived alone
This summer in the Fouche house near LeRoy,
Came west to visit Irma Leese and rest.

For Elenor Murray had not been herself
Since that hard spring when in the hospital,
Caring for soldiers stricken with the flu,
She took bronchitis, after weeks in bed
Rose weak and shaky, crept to health again
Through egg-nogs, easy strolls about Bordeaux.
And later went to Nice upon a furlough
To get her strength again.

But while she saw
Her vital flame burn brightly, as of old
On favored days, yet for the rest the flame
Sputtered or sank a little. So she thought
How good it might be to go west and stroll
About the lovely country of LeRoy,
And hear the whispering cedars by a window
In the Fouche mansion where this Irma Leese,
Her aunt, was summering. So she telegraphed,
And being welcomed, went.

This stately house,
Built sixty years before by Arthur Fouche,
A brick home with a mansard roof, an oriel
That looked between the cedars, and a porch
With great Ionic columns, from the street

Stood distantly amid ten acres of lawn,
Trees, flower plots — belonged to Irma Leese,
Who had reclaimed it from a chiropractor,
To cleanse the name of Fouche from that indignity,
And bring it in the family again,
Since she had spent her girlhood, womanhood
To twenty years amid its twenty rooms.
For Irma Leese at twenty years had married
And found herself at twenty-five a widow,
With money left her, then had tried again,
And after years dissolved the second pact,
And made a settlement, was rich in fact,
Now forty-two. Five years before had come
And found the house she loved a sanitarium,
A chiropractor's home. And as she stood
Beside the fence and saw the oriel,
Remembered all her happiness on this lawn
With brothers and with sisters, one of whom
Was Elenor Murray's mother, then she willed
To buy the place and spend some summers here.
And here she was the summer Elenor Murray
Returned from France.

And Irma Leese had said:
" Here is your room, it has the oriel,
And there's the river and the hills for you.
Have breakfast in your room what hour you will,
Rise when you will. We'll drive and walk and rest,
Run to Chicago when we have a mind.

I have a splendid chauffeur now and maids.
You must grow strong and well."

And Elenor Murray
Gasped out her happiness for the pretty room,
And stood and viewed the river and the hills,
And wept a little on the gentle shoulder
Of Irma Leese.

And so the days had passed
Of walking, driving, resting, many talks;
For Elenor Murray spoke to Irma Leese
Of tragic and of rapturous days in France,
And Irma Leese, though she had lived full years,
Had scarcely lived as much as Elenor Murray,
And could not hear enough from Elenor Murray
Of the war and France, but mostly she would urge
Her niece to tell of what affairs of love
Had come to her. And Elenor Murray told
Of Gregory Wenner, save she did not tell
The final secret, with a gesture touched
The story off by saying: It was hopeless,
I went into religion to forget.
But on a day she said to Irma Leese:
" I almost met my fate at Nice," then sketched
A hurried picture of a brief romance.
But Elenor Murray told her nothing else
Of loves or men. But all the while the aunt
Weighed Elenor Murray, on a day exclaimed:
" I see myself in you, and you are like

Your Aunt Corinne who died in ninety-two.
I'll tell you all about your Aunt Corinne
Some day when we are talking, but I see
You have the Fouche blood — we are lovers all.
Your mother is a lover, Elenor,
If you would know it."

"O, your Aunt Corinne
She was most beautiful, but unfortunate.
Her husband was past sixty when she married,
And she was thirty-two. He was distinguished,
Had money and all that, but youth is all,
Is everything for love, and she was young,
And he was old."

A week or two had passed
Since Elenor Murray came to Irma Leese,
When on a morning fire broke from the eaves
And menaced all the house; but maids and gardeners
With buckets saved the house, while Elenor Murray
And Irma Leese dipped water from the barrels
That stood along the ell.

A week from that
A carpenter was working at the eaves
Along the ell, and in the garret knelt
To pry up boards and patch. When as he pried
A board up, he beheld between the rafters
A package of old letters stained and frayed,
Tied with a little ribbon almost dust.

And when he went down-stairs, delivered it
To Irma Leese and said: Here are some letters
I found up in the garret under the floor,
I pried up in my work.

Then Irma Leese
Looked at the letters, saw her sister's hand,
Corinne's upon the letters, opened, read,
And saw the story which she knew before
Brought back in this uncanny way, the hand
Which wrote the letters six and twenty years
Turned back to dust. And when her niece came in
She showed the letters, said, " I'll let you read,
I'll tell you all about them ":

" When Corinne
Was nineteen, very beautiful and vital,
Red-cheeked, a dancer, bubbling like new wine,
A catch, as you may know, you see this house
Was full of laughter then, so many children.
We had our parties, too, and young men thought,
Each one of us would have a dowry splendid —
A young man from Chicago came along,
A lawyer there, but lately come from Pittsburgh
To practice, win his way. I knew this man.
He was a handsome dog with curly hair,
Blue eyes and sturdy figure. Well, Corinne
Quite lost her heart. He came here to a dance,
And so the game commenced. And father thought
The fellow was not right, but all of us,

Your mother and myself said, yes he is,
And we conspired to help Corinne and smooth
The path of confidence. But later on
Corinne was not so buoyant, would not talk
With me, your mother freely. Then at last
Her eyes were sometimes red; we knew she wept.
And, then Corinne was sent away. Well, here
You'll guess the rest. Her health was breaking down,
That's true enough; the world could think its thoughts,
And say his love grew cold, or she found out
The black-leg that he was, and he was that.
But Elenor, the truth was more than that,
Corinne had been betrayed, she went away
To right herself — these letters prove the case,
Which all the gossips, busy as they were,
Could not make out. The paper at LeRoy
Had printed that she went to pay a visit
To relatives in the east. Three months or so
She came back well and rosy. But meanwhile
Your grandfather had paid this shabby scoundrel
A sum of money, I forget the sum,
To get these letters of your Aunt Corinne —
These letters here. This matter leaked, of course.
And then we let the story take this form
And moulded it a little to this form:
The fellow was a scoundrel — this was proved
When he took money to return her letters.
They were love letters, they had been engaged,
She thought him worthy, found herself deceived
Proved, too, by taking money, when at first

He looked with honorable eyes to young Corinne,
And won her trust. And so Corinne lived here
Ten years or more, at thirty married the judge,
Her senior thirty years, and went away.
She bore a child and died — look Elenor
Here are the letters which she took and nailed
Beneath the garret floor. We'll read them through,
And then I'll burn them."

Irma Leese rose up
And put the letters in her desk and said:
" Let's ride along the river." So they rode,
But as they rode, the day being clear and mild
The fancy took them to Chicago, where
They lunched and spent the afternoon, returning
At ten o'clock that night.

And the next morning
When Irma Leese expected Elenor
To rise and join her, asked for her, a maid
Told Irma Leese that Elenor had gone
To walk somewhere. And all that day she waited.
But as night came, she fancied Elenor
Had gone to see her mother, once rose up
To telephone, then stopped because she felt
Elenor might have plans she would not wish
Her mother to get wind of — let it go.
But when night came, she wondered, fell asleep
With wondering and worry.

But next morning
As she was waiting for the car to come
To motor to LeRoy, and see her sister,
Elenor's mother, in a casual way,
Learn if her niece was there, and waiting read
The letters of Corinne, the telephone
Rang in an ominous way, and Irma Leese
Sprang up to answer, got the tragic word
Of Elenor Murray found beside the river.
Left all the letters spilled upon her desk
And motored to the river, to LeRoy
Where Coroner Merival took the body.

Just
As Irma Leese departed, in the room
A sullen maid revengeful for the fact
She was discharged, was leaving in a day,
Entered and saw the letters, read a little,
And gathered them, went to her room and packed
Her telescope and left, went to LeRoy,
And gave a letter to this one and that,
Until the servant maids and carpenters
And some lubricous fellows at LeRoy
Who made companions of these serving maids,
Had each a letter of the dead Corinne,
Which showed at last, after some twenty years,
Of silence and oblivion, to LeRoy
With memory to refresh, that poor Corinne
Had given her love, herself, had been betrayed,
Abandoned by a scoundrel.

IRMA LEESE

Merival,
The Coroner, when told about the letters,
For soon the tongues were wagging in LeRoy,
Went here and there to find them, till he learned
What quality of love the dead Corinne
Had given to this man. Then shook his head,
Resolved to see if he could not unearth
In Elenor Murray's life some faithless lover
Who sought her death.

The letters' riffle crawled
Through shadows of the waters of LeRoy
Until it looked a snake, was seen as such
In Tokio by Franklin Hollister,
The son of dead Corinne; it seemed a snake:
He heard the coroner through neglect or malice
Had let the letters scatter — not the truth; —
The coroner had gathered up the letters,
Befriending Irma Leese; she got them back
Through Merival. The riffle's just the same.
And hence this man in Tokio is crazed
For shame and fear — for fear the girl he loves
Will hear his mother's story and break off
Her marriage promise.

So in reckless rage
He posts a letter off to Lawyer Hood,
Chicago, Illinois — the coroner
Gets all the story through this Lawyer Hood,
Long after Elenor's inquest is at end.

Meantime he cools, is wiser, thinks it bad
To stir the scandal with a suit at law.
And then when cooled he hears from Lawyer Hood
Who tells him what the truth is. So it ends.

These letters and the greenish wave that coiled
At Tokio is beyond the coroner's eye
Fixed on the water where the pebble fell: —
This death of Elenor, circles close at hand
Engage his interest. Now he seeks to learn
About her training and religious life.
And hears of Miriam Fay, a friend he thinks,
And confidant of her religious life,
Head woman of the school where Elenor
Learned chemistry, materia medica,
Anatomy, to fit her for the work
Of nursing. And he writes this Miriam Fay
And Miriam Fay responds. The letter comes
Before the jury. Here is what she wrote: —

MIRIAM FAY'S LETTER

Elenor Murray asked to go in training
And came to see me, but the school was full,
We could not take her. Then she asked to stand
Upon a list and wait, I put her off.
She came back, and she came back, till at last
I took her application; then she came

And pushed herself and asked when she could come,
And start to train. At last I laughed and said:
" Well, come to-morrow." I had never seen
Such eagerness, persistence. So she came.
She tried to make a friend of me, perhaps
Since it was best, I being in command.
But anyway she wooed me, tried to please me.
And spite of everything I grew to love her,
Though I distrusted her. But yet again
I had belief in her best self, though doubting
The girl somehow. But when I learned the girl
Had never had religious discipline,
Her father without faith, her mother too,
Her want of moral sense, I understood.
She lacked stability of spirit, to-day
She would be one thing, something else the next.
Shot up in fire, which failed and died away
And I began to see her fraternize
With girls who had her traits, too full of life
To be what they should be, unstable too,
Much like herself.

Not long before she came
Into the training school, six months, perhaps,
She had some tragedy, I don't know what,
Had been quite ill in body and in mind.
When she went into training I could see
Her purpose to wear down herself, forget
In weariness of body, something lived.
She was alert and dutiful and sunny,

And this religious flare had cured her up
Of what was killing her when first I knew her.
There was another thing that drew her back
To flesh, away from spirit: She saw bodies,
And handled bodies as a nurse, forgot
The body is the spirit's temple, fell
To some materialism of thought. And now
Avoided me, was much away, of course,
On duty here and there. I tried to hold her,
Protect and guide her, wrote to her at times
To make confession, take communion. She
Ignored these letters. But I heard her say
The body was as natural as the soul,
And just as natural its desires. She kept
Out of the wreck of faith one thing alone,
If she kept that: She could endure to hear
God's name profaned, but would not stand to hear
The Savior's spoken in irreverence.
She was afraid, no doubt. Or to be just,
The tender love of Christ, his sacrifice,
Perhaps had won her wholly — let it go,
I'll say that much for her.

Why am I harsh?
Because I saw the good in her all streaked
With so much evil, evil known and lived
In knowledge of it, clung to none the less,
Unstable as water, how could she succeed?
Untruthful, how could confidence be hers?
I sometimes think she joined the church to mask

A secret life, renewed forgiven sins.
After she cloaked herself with piety.
Perhaps, at least, when she saw what to do,
And how to do it, using these detours
Of piety to throw us off, who else
Had seen what doors she entered, whence she came.
She wronged the church, I think, made it a screen
To stand behind for kisses, to look from
Inviting kisses. Then, as I have said,
She took materialism from her work,
And so renewed her sins. She drank, I think,
And smoked and feasted; but as for the rest,
The smoke obscured the flame, but there is flame
Or fire at least where there is smoke.

You ask
What took her to the war? Why only this:
Adventure, chance of marriage, amorous conquests—
The girl was mad for men, although I saw
Her smoke obscured the flame, I never saw her
Except with robins far too tame or lame
To interest her, and robins prove to me
The hawk is somewhere, waits for night to join
His playmate when the robins are at rest.
You see the girl has madness in her, flies
From exaltation up to ecstasy.
Feeds on emotion, never has enough.
Tries all things, states of spirit, even beliefs.
Passes from lust (I think) to celibacy,
Feasts, fasts, eats, starves, has raptures then inflicts

The whip upon her back, is penitent,
Then proud, is humble, then is arrogant,
Looks down demurely, stares you out of face,
But runs the world around. For in point of fact,
She traveled much, knew cities and their ways;
And when I used to see her at the convent
So meek, clothed like a sewing maid, at once
The pictures that she showed me of herself
At seaside places or on boulevards,
Her beauty clothed in linen or in silk,
Came back to mind, and I would resurrect
The fragments of our talks in which I saw
How she knew foods and drinks and restaurants,
And fashionable shops. This girl could fool the elect —
She fooled me for a time. I found her out.
Did she aspire? Perhaps, if you believe
It's aspiration to seek out the rich,
And ape them. Not for me. Of course she went
To get adventure in the war, perhaps
She got too much. But as to waste of life,
She might have been a quiet, noble woman
Keeping her place in life, not trying to rise
Out of her class — too useless — in her class
Making herself all worthy, serviceable.
You'll find 'twas pride that slew her. Very like
She found a rich man, tried to hold him, lost
Her honor and her life in consequence.

When Merival showed this letter to the jury,
Marion the juryman spoke up:

ARCHIBALD LOWELL

"You know that type of woman — saintly hag!
I wouldn't take her word about a thing
By way of inference, or analysis.
They had some trouble, she and Elenor
You may be sure." And Merival replied:
"Take it for what it's worth. I leave you now
To see the man who owns the *Daily Times.*
He's turned upon our inquest, did you see
The jab he gives me? I can jab as well."
So Merival went out and took with him
A riffle in the waters of circumstance
Set up by Elenor Murray's death to one
Remote, secure in greatness — to the man
Who ran the *Times.*

ARCHIBALD LOWELL

Archibald Lowell, owner of the *Times*
Lived six months of the year at Sunnyside,
His Gothic castle near LeRoy, so named
Because no sun was in him, it may be.
His wife was much away when on this earth
At cures, in travel, fighting psychic ills,
Approaching madness, dying nerves. They said
Her heart was starved for living with a man
So cold and silent. Thirty years she lived
Bound to this man, in restless agony,
And as she could not free her life from his,

Nor keep it living with him, on a day
She stuck a gas hose in her mouth and drank
Her lungs full of the lethal stuff and died.
That was the very day the hunter found
Elenor Murray's body near the river.
A servant saw this Mrs. Lowell lying
A copy of the *Times* clutched in her hand,
Which published that a slip of paper found
In Elenor Murray's pocket had these words
"To be brave and not to flinch." And was she brave,
And nerved to end it by these words of Elenor?
But Archibald, the husband, could not bear
To have the death by suicide made known.
He laid the body out, as if his wife
Had gone to bed as usual, turned a jet
And left it, just as if his wife had failed
To fully turn it, then went in the room;
Then called the servants, did not know that one
Had seen her with the *Times* clutched in her hand.
He thought the matter hidden. Merival,
All occupied with Elenor Murray's death
Gave to a deputy the Lowell inquest.
But later what this servant saw was told
To Merival.

And now no more alone
Than when his wife lived, Lowell passed the days
At Sunnyside, as he had done for years.
He sat alone, and paced the rooms alone,
With hands behind him clasped, in fear and wonder

Of life and what life is. He rode about,
And viewed his blooded cattle on the hills.
But what were all these rooms and acres to him
With no face near him but the servants, gardeners?
Sometimes he wished he had a child to draw
Upon his fabulous income, growing more
Since all his life was centered in the *Times*
To swell its revenues, and in the process
His spirit was more fully in the *Times*
Than in his body. There were eyes who saw
How deftly was his spirit woven in it
Until it was a scarf to bind and choke
The public throat, or stifle honest thought
Like a soft pillow offered for the head,
But used to smother. There were eyes who saw
The working of its ways emasculate,
Its tones of gray, where flame had been the thing,
Its timorous steps, while spying on the public,
To learn the public's thought. Its cautious pauses,
With foot uplifted, ears pricked up to hear
A step fall, twig break. Platitudes in progress —
With sugar coat of righteousness and order,
Respectability.

Did the public make it?
Or did it make the public, that it fitted
With such exactness in the communal life?
Some thousands thought it fair — what should they think
When it played neutral in the matter of news
To both sides of the question, though at last

It turned the judge, and chose the better side,
Determined from the first, a secret plan,
And cunning way to turn the public scale?
Some thousands liked the kind of news it printed
Where no sensation flourished — smallest type
That fixed attention for the staring eyes
Needed for type so small. But others knew
It led the people by its fair pretensions,
And used them in the end. In any case
This editor played hand-ball in this way:
The advertisers tossed the ball, the readers
Caught it and tossed it to the advertisers:
And as the readers multiplied, the columns
Of advertising grew, and Lowell's thought
Was how to play the one against the other,
And fill his purse.

It was an ingrown mind,
And growing more ingrown with time. Afraid
Of crowds and streets, uncomfortable in clubs,
No warmth in hands to touch his fellows' hands,
Keeping aloof from politicians, loathing
The human alderman who bails the thief;
The little scamp who pares a little profit,
And grafts upon a branch that takes no harm.
He loved the active spirit, if it worked,
And feared the active spirit, if it played.
This Lowell hid himself from favor seekers,
Such letters filtered to him through a sieve
Of secretaries. If he had a friend,

ARCHIBALD LOWELL

Who was a mind to him as well, perhaps
It was a certain lawyer, but who knew?
And cursed with monophobia, none the less
This Lowell lived alone there near LeRoy,
Surrounded by his servants, at his desk
A secretary named McGill, who took
Such letters, editorials as he spoke.
His life was nearly waste. A peanut stand
Should be as much remembered as the *Times,*
When fifty years are passed.

And every month
The circulation manager came down
To tell the great man of the gain or loss
The paper made that month in circulation,
In advertising, chiefly. Lowell took
The audit sheets and studied them, and gave
Steel bullet words of order this or that.
He took the dividends, and put them — where?
God knew alone.

He went to church sometimes,
On certain Sundays, for a pious mother
Had reared him so, and sat there like a corpse,
A desiccated soul, so dry the moss
Upon his teeth was dry.

And on a day,
His wife now in the earth a week or so,
Himself not well, the doctor there to quiet

His fears of sudden death, pains in the chest,
His manager had come — was made to wait
Until the doctor finished — brought the sheets
Which showed the advertising, circulation.
And Lowell studied them and said at last:
" That new reporter makes the Murray inquest
A thing of interest, does the public like it? "
To which the manager: " It sells the paper."
And then the great man: " It has served its use.
Now being nearly over, print these words:
The Murray inquest shows to what a length
Fantastic wit can go, it should be stopped."
An editorial later might be well:
Comment upon a father and a mother
Invaded in their privacy, and life
In intimate relations dragged to view
To sate the curious eye.

Next day the *Times*
Rebuked the coroner in these words. And then
Merival sent word: " I come to see you,
Or else you come to see me, or by process
If you refuse." And so the editor
Invited Merival to Sunnyside
To talk the matter out. This was the talk:
First Merival went over all the ground
In mild locution, what he sought to do.
How as departments in the war had studied
Disease and what not, tabulated facts,
He wished to make a start for knowing lives,

And finding remedies for lives. It's true
Not much might be accomplished, also true
The poet and the novelist gave thought,
Analysis to lives, yet who could tell
What system might grow up to find the fault
In marriage as it is, in rearing children
In motherhood, in homes; for Merival
By way of wit said to this dullest man:
" I know of mother and of home, of heaven
I've yet to learn." Whereat the great man winced,
To hear the home and motherhood so slurred,
And briefly said the *Times* would go its way
To serve the public interests, and to foster
American ideals as he conceived them.
Then Merival who knew the great man's nature,
How small it was and barren, cold and dull,
And wedded to small things, to gold, and fear
Of change, and knew the life the woman lived,—
These seven days in the earth — with such a man,
Just by a zephyr of intangible thought
Veered round the talk to her, to voice a wonder
About the jet left turned, his deputy
Had overlooked a hose which she could drink
Gas from a jet. " You needn't touch the jet.
Just leave it as she left it — hide the hose,
And leave the gas on, put the woman in bed."
" This deputy," said Merival, " was slack
And let a verdict pass of accident."
" Oh yes " said Merival, " your servant told
About the hose, the *Times* clutched in her hand.

And may I test this jet, while I am here?
Go up to see and test it?"

Whereupon
The great man with wide eyes stared in the eyes
Of Merival, was speechless for a moment,
Not knowing what to say, while Merival
Read something in his eyes, saw in his eyes
The secret beat to cover, saw the man
Turn head away which shook a little, saw
His chest expand for breath, and heard at last
The editor in four steel bullet words,
"It is not necessary."

Merival
Had trapped the solitary fox — arose
And going said: "If it was suicide
The inquest must be changed."

The editor
Looked through the window at the coroner
Walking the gravel walk, and saw his hand
Unlatch the iron gate, and saw him pass
From view behind the trees.

Then horror rose
Within his brain, a nameless horror took
The heart of him, for fear this coroner
Would dig this secret up, and show the world
The dead face of the woman self-destroyed,

And of the talk, which would not come to him,
To poison air he breathed no less, of why
This woman took her life; if for ill health
Then why ill health? O, well he knew at heart
What he had done to break her, starve her life.
And now accused himself too much for words,
Ways, temperament of him that murdered her,
For lovelessness, and for deliberate hands
That pushed her off and down.

He rode that day
To see his cattle, overlook the work,
But when night came with silence and the cry
Of night-hawks, and the elegy of leaves
Beneath the stars that looked so cold at him
As he turned seeking sleep, the dreaded pain
Grew stronger in his breast. Dawn came at last
And then the stir and voices of the maids.
And after breakfast in the carven room
Archibald Lowell standing by the mantel
In his great library, felt sudden pain;
Saw sudden darkness, nothing saw at once,
Lying upon the marble of the hearth;
His great head cut which struck the post of brass
In the hearth's railing — only a little blood!
Archibald Lowell being dead at last;
The *Times* left to the holders of the stock
Who kept his policy, and kept the *Times*
As if the great man lived.

And Merival
Taking the doctor's word that death was caused
By angina pectoris, let it drop.
And went his way with Elenor Murray's case.

So Lowell's dead and buried; had to die,
But not through Elenor Murray. That's the Fate
That laughs at greatness, little things that sneak
From alien neighborhoods of life and kill.
And Lowell leaves a will, to which a boy —
Who sold the *Times* once, afterward the *Star* —
Is alien as this Elenor to the man
Who owned the *Times*. But still is brought in touch
With Lowell's will, because this Lowell died
Before he died. And Merival learns the facts
And brings them to the jury in these words: —

WIDOW FORTELKA

Marie Fortelka, widow, mother of Josef,
Now seventeen, an invalid at home
In a house, in Halstead Street, his running side
Aching with broken ribs, read in the *Times*
Of Lowell's death the editor, dressed herself
To call on William Rummler, legal mind
For Lowell and the *Times*.

WIDOW FORTELKA

It was a day
When fog hung over the city, and she thought
Of fogs in Germany whence she came, and thought
Of hard conditions there when she was young.
Then as her boy, this Josef, coughed, she looked
And felt a pang at heart, a rise of wrath,
And heard him moan for broken ribs and lungs
That had been bruised or mashed. America,
Oh yes, America, she said to self,
How is it different from the land I left?
And then her husband's memory came to mind:
How he had fled his country to be free,
And come to Philadelphia, with the thrill
Of new life found, looked at the famous Hall
Which gave the Declaration, cried and laughed
And said: "The country's free, and I am here,
I am free now, a man, no more a slave."
What did he find? A job, but prices high.
Wages decreased in winter, then a strike.
He joined the union, found himself in jail
For passing hand-bills which announced the strike,
And asked the public to take note, and punish
The corporation, not to trade with it,
For its injustice toward the laborers.
And in the court he heard the judge decide:
"Free speech cannot be used to gain the ends
Of ruin by conspiracy like this
Against a business. Men from foreign lands,
Of despot rule and poverty, who come
For liberty and means of life among us

Must learn that liberty is ordered liberty,
And is not license, freedom to commit
Injury to another."

So in jail
He lay his thirty days out, went to work
Where he could find it, found the union smashed,
Himself compelled to take what job he could,
What wages he was offered. And his children
Kept coming year by year till there were eight,
And Josef was but ten. And then he died
And left this helpless family, and the boy
Sold papers on the street, ten years of age,
The widow washed.

And first he sold the *Times*
And helped to spread the doctrines of the *Times*
Of ordered liberty and epicene
Reforms of this or that. But when the *Star*
With millions back of it broke in the field
He changed and sold the *Star,* too bad for him —
Discovered something:

Josef did not know
The corners of the street are free to all,
Or free to none, where newsboys stood and sold,
And kept their stands, or rather where the powers
That kept the great conspiracy of the press
Controlled the stands, and to prevent the *Star*
From gaining foot-hold. Not upon this corner

WIDOW FORTELKA

Nor on that corner, any corner in short
Shall newsboys sell the *Star*. But Josef felt,
Being a boy, indifferent to the rules,
Well founded, true or false, that all the corners
Were free to all, and for his daring, strength
Had been selected, picked to sell the *Star*,
And break the ground, gain place upon the stands.
He had been warned from corners, chased and boxed
By heavy fists from corners more than once
Before the day they felled him. On that day
A monster bully, once a pugilist,
Came on him selling the *Star* and knocked him down,
Kicked in his ribs and broke a leg and cracked
His little skull.

And so they took him home
To Widow Fortelka and the sisters, brothers,
Whose bread he earned. And there he lay and moaned,
And when he sat up had a little cough,
Was short of breath.

And on this foggy day
When Widow Fortelka reads in the *Times*
That Lowell, the editor, is dead, he sits
With feet wrapped in a quilt and gets his breath
With open mouth, his face is brightly flushed;
A fetid sweetness fills the air of the room
That from his open mouth comes. Josef lingers
A few weeks yet — he has tuberculosis.
And so his mother looks at him, resolves

To call this day on William Rummler, see
If Lowell's death has changed the state of things;
And if the legal mind will not relent
Now that the mind that fed it lies in death.
It's true enough, she thinks, I was dismissed,
And sent away for good, but never mind.
It can't be true this pugilist went farther
Than the authority of his hiring, that's
The talk this lawyer gave her, used a word
She could not keep in mind — the lawyer said
Respondeat superior in this case
Was not in point — and if it could be proved
This pugilist was hired by the *Times,*
No one could prove the *Times* had hired him
To beat a boy, commit a crime. Well, then
" What was he hired for? " the widow asked.
And then she talked with newsboys, and they said
The papers had their sluggers, all of them,
Even the *Star,* and that was just a move
In getting circulation, keeping it.
And all these sluggers watched the stands and drove
The newsboys selling *Stars* away.

No matter,
She could not argue with this lawyer Rummler,
Who said: " You must excuse me, go away,
I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do."

Now Widow Fortelka had never heard
Of Elenor Murray, had not read a line

Of Elenor Murray's death beside the river.
She was as ignorant of the interview
Between the coroner and this editor
Who died next morning fearing Merival
Would dig up Mrs. Lowell and expose
Her suicide, as conferences of spirits
Directing matters in another world.
Her thought was moulded no less by the riffles
That spread from Elenor Murray and her death.
And she resolved to see this lawyer Rummler,
And try again to get a settlement
To help her dying boy. And so she went.

That morning Rummler coming into town
Had met a cynic friend upon the train
Who used his tongue as freely as his mood
Moved him to use it. So he said to Rummler:
" I see your client died — a hell of a life
That fellow lived, a critic in our midst
Both hated and caressed. And I suppose
You drew his will and know it, I will bet,
If he left anything to charity,
Or to the city, it is some narcotic
To keep things as they are, the ailing body
To dull and bring forgetfulness of pain.
He was a fine albino of the soul,
No pigment in his genesis to give
Color to hair or eyes, he had no gonads."
And William Rummler laughed and said, " You'll see
What Lowell did when I probate the will."

Then William Rummler thought that very moment
Of plans whereby his legal mind could thrive
Upon the building of the big hotel
To Lowell's memory, for perpetual use
Of the Y. M. C. A., the seminary, too,
In Moody's memory for an orthodox
Instruction in the bible.

With such things
In mind, this William Rummler opened the door,
And stepped into his office, got a shock
From seeing Widow Fortelka on the bench,
Where clients waited, waiting there for him.
She rose and greeted him, and William Rummler
Who in a stronger moment might have said:
"You must excuse me, I have told you, madam,
I can do nothing for you," let her follow
Into his private office and sit down
And there renew her suit.

She said to him:
"My boy is dying now, I think his ribs
Were driven in his lungs and punctured them.
He coughs the worst stuff up you ever saw.
And has an awful fever, sweats his clothes
Right through, is breathless, cannot live a month.
And I know you can help me. Mr. Lowell,
So you told me, refused a settlement,
Because this pugilist was never hired
To beat my boy, or any boy; for fear

WIDOW FORTELKA

It would be an admission, and be talked of,
And lead another to demand some money.
But now he's dead, and surely you are free
To help me some, so that this month or two,
While my boy Joe is dying he can have
What milk he wants and food, and when he dies,
A decent coffin, burial. Then perhaps
There will be something left to help me with —
I wash to feed the children, as you know."

And William Rummler looked at her and thought
For one brief moment with his lawyer mind
About this horror, while the widow wept,
And as she wept a culprit mood was his
For thinking of the truth, for well he knew
This slugger had been hired for such deeds,
And here was one result. And in his pain
The cynic words his friend had said to him
Upon the train began to stir, and then
He felt a rush of feeling, blood, and thought
Of clause thirteen in Lowell's will, which gave
The trustees power, and he was chief trustee,
To give some worthy charity once a year,
Not to exceed a thousand dollars. So
He thought to self, " This is a charity.
I will advance the money, get it back
As soon as I probate the will."

At last
He broke this moment's musing and spoke up:

"Your case appeals to me. You may step out,
And wait till I prepare the papers, then
I'll have a check made for a thousand dollars."

Widow Fortelka rose up and took
The crucifix she wore and kissed it, wept
And left the room.

Now here's the case of Percy Ferguson
You'd think his life was safe from Elenor Murray.
No preacher ever ran a prettier boat
Than Percy Ferguson, all painted white
With polished railings, flying at the fore
The red and white and blue. Such little waves
Set dancing by the death of Elenor Murray
To sink so fine a boat, and leave the Reverend
To swim to shore! he couldn't walk the waves!

REV. PERCY FERGUSON

The Rev. Percy Ferguson, patrician
Vicar of Christ, companion of the strong,
And member of the inner shrine, where men
Observe the rituals of the golden calf;
A dilettante, and writer for the press
Upon such themes as optimism, order,
Obedience, beauty, law, while Elenor Murray's

REV. PERCY FERGUSON

Life was being weighed by Merival
Preached in disparagement of Merival
Upon a fatal Sunday, as it chanced,
Too near to doom's day for the clergyman.
For, as the word had gone about that waste
In lives preoccupied this Merival,
And many talked of waste, and spoke a life
Where waste had been in whole or part — the pulpit
Should take a hand, thought Ferguson. And so
The Reverend Percy Ferguson preached thus
To a great audience and fashionable:
"The hour's need is a firmer faith in Christ,
A closer hold on God, belief again
In sin's reality; the age's vice
Is laughter over sin, the attitude
That sin is not!" And then to prove that sin
Is something real, he spoke of money sins
That bring the money panics, of the beauty
That lust corrupts, wound up with Athen's story,
Which sin decayed. And touching on this waste,
Which was the current talk, what is this waste
Except a sin in life, the moral law
Transgressed, God mocked, the order of man's life,
And God's will disobeyed? Show me a life
That lives through Christ and none shall find a waste."
This clergyman some fifteen years before
Went on a hunt for Alma Bell, who taught
The art department of the school, and found
Enough to scare the school directors that
She burned with lawless love for Elenor Murray.

And made it seem the teacher's reprimand
In school of Elenor Murray for her ways
Of strolling, riding with young men at night,
Was moved by jealousy of Elenor Murray,
Being herself in love with Elenor Murray.
This clergyman laid what he found before
The school directors, Alma Bell was sent
Out of the school her way, and disappeared. . . .
But now, though fifteen years had passed, the story
Of Alma Bell and Elenor Murray crept
Like poisonous mist, scarce seen, around LeRoy.
It had been so always. And all these years
No one would touch or talk in open words
The loathsome matter, since girls grown to women,
And married in the town might have their names
Relinked to Alma Bell's. And was it true
That Elenor Murray strayed as a young girl
In those far days of strolls and buggy rides?

But after Percy Ferguson had thundered
Against the inquest, Warren Henderson,
A banker of the city, who had dealt
In paper of the clergyman, and knew
The clergyman had interests near Victoria,
Was playing at the money game, and knew
He tottered on the brink, and held to hands
That feared to hold him longer — Henderson,
A wise man, cynical, contemptuous
Of frocks so sure of ways to avoid the waste,
So unforgiving of the tangled moods

And baffled eyes of men; contemptuous
Of frocks so avid for the downy beds,
Place, honors, money, admiration, praise,
Much wished to see the clergyman come down
And lay his life beside the other sinners.
But more he knew, admired this Alma Bell,
Did not believe she burned with guilty love
For Elenor Murray, thought the moral hunt
Or Alma Bell had made a waste of life,
As ignorance might pluck a flower for thinking
It was a weed; on Elenor Murray too
Had brought a waste, by scenting up her life
With something faint but ineradicable.
And Warren Henderson would have revenge,
And waited till old Jacob Bangs should fix
His name to paper once again of Ferguson's
To tell old Jacob Bangs he should be wary,
Since banks and agencies were tremulous
With hints of failure at Victoria.

So meeting Jacob Bangs the banker told him
What things were bruited, and warned the man
To fix his name no more to Ferguson's paper.
It was the very day the cleryman
Sought Jacob Bangs to get his signature
Upon a note for money at the bank.
And Jacob Bangs was silent and evasive,
Demurred a little and refused at last.
Which sent the anxious clergyman adrift
To look for other help. He looked and looked,

And found no other help. Associates
Depending more on men than God, fell down,
And in a day the bubble burst. The *Times*
Had columns of the story.

In a week,
At Sunday service Percy Ferguson
Stood in the pulpit to confess his sin,
The Murray jury sat and fed their joy
For hearing Ferguson confess his sin.
This is the way he did it:

"First, my friends,
I do not say I have betrayed the trust
My friends have given me. Some years ago
I thought to make provision for my wife,
I wished to start some certain young men right.
I had another plan I can't disclose,
Not selfish, you'll believe me. So I took
My savings made as lecturer and writer
And put them in this venture. I'm ashamed
To say how great those savings were, in view
Of what the poor earn, those who work with hands!
Ashamed too, when I think these savings grew
Because I spoke the things the rich desired.
And squared my words with what the strong would have —
Therein Christ was betrayed. The end has come.
I too have been betrayed, my confidence
Wronged by my fellows in the enterprise.

I hope to pay my debts. Hard poverty
Has come to me to bring me back to Christ."

" But listen now: These years I lived perturbed,
Lest this life which I grew into would mould
Young men and ministers, lead them astray
To public life, sensation, lecture platforms,
Prosperity, away from Christ-like service,
Obscure and gentle. To those souls I owe
My heart's confession: I have loved my books
More than the poor, position more than service,
Office and honor over love of men;
Lived thus when all my strength belonged to thought,
To work for schools, the sick, the poor, the friendless,
To boys and girls with hungry minds. My friends,
Here I abase my soul before God's throne,
And ask forgiveness for the pious zeal
With which I smote the soul of Alma Bell,
And smudged the robe of Elenor Murray. God,
Thou, who has taken Elenor Murray home,
After great service in the war, O grant
Thy servant yet to kneel before the soul
Of Elenor Murray. For who am I to judge?
What was I then to judge? who coveted honors,
When solitude, where I might dwell apart,
And listen to the voice of God was mine,
By calling and for seeking. I have broken
The oath I took to take no purse or scrip.
I have loved money, even while I knew
No servant of Christ can work for Christ and strive

For money. And if anywhere there be
A noble boy who would become a minister,
Who has heard me, or read my books, and grown
Thereby to cherish secular ideas
Of Christ's work in the world, to him I say:
Repent the thought, reject me; there are men
And women missionaries, here, abroad,
And nameless workers in poor settlements
Whose latchets to stoop down and to unloose
I am unworthy."

"Gift of life too short!
O, beautiful gift of God, too brief at best,
For all a man can do, how have I wasted
This precious gift! How wasted it in pride,
In seeking out the powerful, the great,
The hands with honors, gold to give — when nothing
Is profitable to a servant of the Christ
Except to shepherd Christ's poor. O, young men,
Interpret not your ministry in terms
Of intellect alone, forefront the heart,
That at the end of life you may look up
And say to God: Behind these are the sheep
Thou gavest me, and not a one is lost."

"As to my enemies, for enemies
A clergyman must have whose fault is mine,
Plato would have us harden hearts to sorrow.
And Zeno roofs of slate for souls to slide
The storm of evil — Christ in sorrow did

For evil good. For me, my prayer is this,
My faith as well, that I may be perfected
Through suffering."

That ended the confession.
Then " Love Divine, All Love Excelling " sounded.
The congregation rose, and some went up
To take the pastor's hand, but others left
To think the matter over.

For some said:
" He married fortunate." And others said:
" We know through Jacob Bangs he has investments
In wheat lands, what's the truth? In any case
What avarice is this that made him anxious
About the comfort of his wife and family?
The thing won't work. He's only middle way
In solving his soul's problem. This confession
Is just a poor beginning." Others said:
" He drove out Alma Bell, let's drive him out."
And others said: " you note we never heard
About this speculation till it failed,
And he was brought to grief. If it had prospered
The man had never told, what do you think? "
But in a year as health failed, Ferguson
Took leave of absence, and the silence of life
Which closes over men, however noisy
With sermons, lectures, covered him. His riffle
Died out in distant waters.

There was a Doctor Burke lived at LeRoy,
Neurologist and student. On a night
When Merival had the jury at his house,
Llewellyn George was telling of his travels
In China and Japan, had mutual friends
With Franklin Hollister, the cousin of Elenor,
And son of dead Corinne, who hid her letters
Under the eaves. The talk went wide and far.
For David Borrow, sunny pessimist,
Thrust logic words at Maiworm, the juryman;
And said our life was bad, and must be so,
While Maiworm trusted God, said life was good.
And Winthrop Marion let play his wit,
The riches of his reading over all.
Thus as they talked this Doctor Burke came in.
"You'll pardon this intrusion, I'll go on
If this is secret business. Let me say
This inquest holds my interest and I've come
To tell of Elenor's ancestry." Thus he spoke.
"There'll be another time if I must go."
And Merival spoke up and said: "why stay
And tell us what you know, or think," and so
The coroner and jury sat and heard:—

DR. BURKE

You've heard of potters' wheels and potters' hands.
I had a dream that told the human tale
As well as potters' wheels or potters' hands.

DR. BURKE

I saw a great hand slopping plasmic jelly
Around the low sides of a giant bowl.
A drop would fly upon the giant table,
And quick the drop would twist up into form,
Become homonculus and wave its hands,
Brandish a little pistol, shoot a creature,
Upspringing from another drop of plasm,
Slopped on the giant table. Other drops,
Flying as water from a grinding stone,
Out of the giant bowl, took little crowns
And put them on their heads and mounted thrones,
And lorded little armies. Some became
Half-drooped and sickly things, like poisoned flies.
And others stood on lighted faggots, others
Fed and commanded, others served and starved,
But many joined the throng of animate drops,
And hurried on the phantom quest.

You see,
Whether you call it potter's hand or hand
That stirs, to no end, jelly in the bowl,
You have the force outside and not inside:
Invest it with a malice, wanton humor,
Which likes to see the plasmic jelly slop,
And rain in drops upon the giant table,
And does not care what happens in the world,
That giant table.

All such dreams are wrong,
My dream is wrong, my waking thought is right.

Man can subdue the giant hand that stirs,
Or turns the wheel, and so these visions err.
For as this farmer, lately come to town,
Picks out the finest corn seeds, and so crops
A finer corn, let's look to human seed,
And raise a purer stock; let's learn of him,
Who does not put defective grains aside
For planting in the spring, but puts aside
The best for planting. For I'd like to see
As much care taken with the human stock
As men now take of corn, race-horses, hogs.
You, Coroner Merival are right, I think.
If we conserve our forests, waterways,
Why not the stream of human life, which wastes
Because its source is wasted, fouled.

Perhaps
Our coroner has started something good,
And brought to public mind what might result
If every man kept record of the traits
Known in his family for the future use
Of those to come in choosing mates.

Behold,
Your moralists and churchmen with your rules
Brought down from Palestine, which says that life
Though tainted, maddened, must not be controlled,
Diverted, headed off, while life in corn,
And life in hogs, that feed the life of man
Should be made better for the life of man —

DR. BURKE

Behold, I say, some hundred millions spent
On paupers, epileptics, deaf and blind;
On feeble minded, invalids, the insane —
Behold, I say, this cost in gold alone,
Leave for the time the tragedy of souls,
Who suffer or must see such suffering,
And then turn back to what? The hand that stirs,
The potter's hand? Why, no — the marriage counter
Where this same state in Christian charity
Spending its millions, lets the fault begin,
And says to epileptics and what not: —
" Go breed your kind, for Jesus came to earth,
And we will house and feed your progeny,
Or hang, incarcerate your murderous spawn,
As it may happen."

And all the time we know
As small grains fruit in small grains, even man
In fifty matters of pathology
Transmits what's in him, blindness, imbecility,
Hysteria, susceptibilities
To cancer and tuberculosis. Also
The soil that sprouts the giant weed of madness —
There's soil which will not sprout them, occupied
Too full by blossoms, healthy trees.

We know
Such things as these — Well, I would sterilize,
Or segregate these shriveled seeds and keep
The soil of life for seeds select, and take

The church and Jesus, if he's in the way,
And say: "You stand aside, and let me raise
A better and a better breed of men."
Quit, shut your sniveling charities; have mercy
Not on these paupers, imbeciles, diseased ones,
But on the progeny you let them breed.
And thereby sponge the greatest waste away,
And source of life's immeasurable tragedies.
Avaunt you potter hands and potter wheels!
God is within us, not without us, we
Are given souls to know and see and guide
Ourselves and those to come, souls that compute
The calculus of beauties, talents, traits,
And show us that the good in seed strives on
To master stocks; that even poisoned blood,
And minds in chemic turmoils, mixed with blood
And minds in harmony, work clean at last —
Else how may normal man to-day be such
With some eight billion ancestors behind,
And something in him of the blood of all
Who lived five hundred years ago or so,
Who were diseased with alcohol and pork,
And poverty? But oh these centuries
Of agony and waste! Let's stop it now!
And since this God within us gives us choice
To let the dirty plasma flow or dam it,
To give the channel to the silver stream
Of starry power, which shall we do? Now choose
Between your race of drunkards, imbeciles,
Lunatics and neurotics, or the race

DR. BURKE

Of those who sing and write, or measure space,
Build temples, bridges, calculate the stars,
Live long and sanely.

Well, I take my son,
I could have prophesied his eyes, through knowing
The color of my mother's, father's eyes,
The color of his mother's parent's eyes.
I could have told his hair.

There's subtler things.
My father died before this son was born;
Why does this son smack lips and turn his hand
Just like my father did? Not imitation —
He never saw him, and I do not do so.
Refine the matter where you will, how far
You choose to go, it is not eyes and hair,
Chins, shape of head, of limbs, or shape of hands,
Nor even features, look of eyes, nor sound
Of voice that we inherit, but the traits
Of innner senses, spiritual gifts, and secret
Beauties and powers of spirit, which result
Not solely by the compound of the souls
Through conjugating cells, but in the fusion
Something arises like an unknown X
And starts another wonder in the soul,
That comes from souls compounded.

Coroner

You have done well to study Elenor Murray.

How do I view the matter? To begin
Here is a man who looks upon a woman,
Desires her, so they marry, up they step
Before the marriage counter, buy a license
To live together, propagate their kind.
No questions asked. I'll later come to that.
This couple has four children, Elenor
Is second to be born. I knew this girl,
I cared for her at times when she was young —
Well, for the picture general, she matures
Goes teaching school, leaves home, goes far away,
Has restlessness and longings, ups and downs
Of ecstasy and depression, has a will
Which drives her onward, dreams that call to her.
Goes to the war at last to sacrifice
Her life in duty, and the root of this
Is masochistic (though I love the flower),
Comes back and dies. I call her not a drop
Slopped from the giant bowl; she is a growth
Proceeding on clear lines, if we could know,
From cells that joined, and had within themselves
The quality of the stream whose source I see
As far as grandparents. And now to this:

We all know what her father, mother are.
No doubt the marriage counter could have seen —
Or asked what was not visible. But who knows
About the father's parents, or the mother's?
I chance to know.

DR. BURKE

The father drinks, you say?
Well, he drank little when this child was born,
Had he drunk much, it is the nerves which crave
The solace of the cup, and not the cup
Which passes from the parent to the child.
His father and his mother were good blood,
Steady, industrious; and just because
His father and his mother had the will
To fight privation, and the lonely days
Of pioneering, so this son had will
To fight, aspire, but at the last to growl,
And darken in that drug store prison, take
To drink at times in anger for a will
That was so balked.

Well, then your marriage counter
Could scarcely ask: What is your aim in life?
You clerk now in a drug store, you aspire
To be a lawyer, if you find yourself
Stopped on your way by poverty, the work
Of clerking to earn bread, you will break down,
And so affect your progeny. So, you see,
For all of that the daughter Elenor
Was born when this ambition had its hope,
Not when it tangled up in hopelessness;
And therefore is thrown out of the account.
The father must be passed and given license
To wed this woman. How about the mother?
You never knew the mother of the mother.
She had great power of life and power of soul,

Lived to be eighty-seven, to the last
Was tense, high voiced, excitable, ecstatic,
Top full of visions, dreams, and plans for life.
But worse than that at fifty lost her mind,
Was two years kept at Kankakee, quite mad,
Grieving for fancied wrongs against her husband
Some five years dead, and praying to keep down
Desire for men. Her malady was sensed
When she began to wander here and there,
In shops and public places, in the church,
Wherever she could meet with men, one man
Particularly to whom she made advances
Unwomanly and strange. And so at last
She turned her whole mind to the church, became
Religion mad, grew mystical, believed
That Jesus Christ had taken her to spouse.
They kept her in confinement for two years.
The rage died down at last, and she came home.
But to the last was nervous, tense, high keyed.
And then her mind failed totally, she died
At eighty-seven here.

Now I could take
Some certain symbols A and a, and show
Out of the laws that Mendel found for us,
What chances Elenor Murray had to live
Free of the madness, clear or in dilute,
Diminished or made over, which came down
From this old woman to her. It's enough
To see in Elenor Murray certain traits,

Passions and powers, ecstasies and sorrows.
And from them life's misfortunes, and to see
They tally, take the color of the soul
Of this old woman, back of her. Even to see
In Elenor Murray's mother states of soul,
And states of nerves, passed on to Elenor Murray
Directly by her mother.

But you say,
Since many say so, here's a woman's soul
Most beautiful and serviceable in the world
And she confutes you, in your logic chopping,
Materialistic program, who would give
The marriage counter power to pick the corn seed
For future planting:

No, I say to this.
What does it come to? She had will enough,
And aspiration, struck out for herself,
Learned for herself, did service in the war,
As many did, and died — all very good.
But not so good that we could quite afford
To take the chances on some other things
Which might have come from her. Well, to begin
Putting aside an autopsy, she died
Because this neural weakness, so derived,
Caught in such stress of life proved far too much
For one so organized; a stress of life
Which others could live through, and have lived through.
The world had Elenor Murray, and she died

Before she was a cost.— But just suppose
No war had been to aureole her life —
And she had lived here and gone mad at last
Become a charge upon the state? Or yet,
As she was love-mad, by the common word,
And as she had neurotic tendencies,
Would seek neurotic types therefore, suppose
She had with some neurotic made a marriage,
And brought upon us types worse than themselves;
Given us the symbol double A instead
Of big and little a, where are you then?
You have some suicides, or murders maybe,
Some crimes in sex, some madness on your hands,
For which to tax the strong to raise, and raise
Some millions every year.

Are we so mad
For beauty, sacrifice and heroism,
So hungry for the stimulus of these
That we cannot discern and fairly appraise
What Elenor Murray was, what to the world
She brought, for which we overlook the harm
She might have done the world? Not if we think!
And if we think, she will not seem God's flower
Made spotted, pale or streaked by cross of breed,
A wonder and a richness in the world;
But she will seem a blossom which to these
Added a novel poison with the power
To spread her poison! And we may dispense
With what she did and what she tried to do,

No longer sentimentalists, to keep
The chances growing in the world to bring
A better race of men.

Then Doctor Burke
Left off philosophy and asked: " How many
Of you who hear me, know that Elenor Murray
Was distant cousin to this necrophile,
This Taylor boy, I call him boy, though twenty,
Who got the rope for that detested murder
Of a young girl — Oh yes, let's save the seed
Of stock like this!"

But only David Borrow
Knew Elenor was cousin to this boy.
And Merival spoke up: "What is to-day?
It's Thursday, it's to-morrow that he hangs.
I'll go now to the jail to see this boy."
" He hangs at nine o'clock," said Dr. Burke.
And Merival got up to go. The party
Broke up, departed. At the jail he saw
The wretched creature doomed to die. And turned
Half sick from seeing how he tossed and looked
With glassy eyes. The sheriff had gone out.
And Merival could see him, get the case.
Next afternoon they met, the sheriff told
This story to the coroner.

CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

I have seen twenty men hanged, hung myself
Two in this jail, with whom I talked the night
Before they had the rope, knotted behind
The ear to break the neck. These two I hanged,
One guilty and defiant, taking chops,
Four cups of coffee just an hour before
We swung him off; the other trembling, pale,
Protesting innocence, but guilty too —
Both wore the same look in the middle watch.
I tell you what it is: You take a steer,
And windlass him to where the butcher stands
With hammer ready for the blow and knife
To slit the throat after the hammer falls,
Well, there's a moment when the steer is standing
Head, neck strained side-ways, eyes rolled side-ways too,
Fixed, bright seen this way, but another way
A film seems spreading on them. That's the look.
They wear a corpse-like pallor, and their tongues
Are loose, sprawl in their mouths, lie paralyzed
Against their teeth, or fall back in their throats
Which make them cough and stop for words and close
Dry lips with little pops.

There's something else:
Their minds are out of them, like a rubber band
Stretched from the place it's pinned, about to break.
And all the time they try to draw it back,

And give it utterance with that sprawling tongue,
And lips too dry for words. They hold it tight
As a woman giving birth holds to the sheet
Tied to the bed's head, pulls the sheet to end
The agony and the reluctance of the child
That pauses, dreads to enter in this world.

So was it with Fred Taylor. But before
The high Court shook his hope, he talked to me
Freely and fully, saying many times
What could the world expect of him beside
Some violence or murder? He had borrowed
The books his lawyers used to fight for him,
And read for hours and days about heredity.
And in our talks he said: mix red and violet,
You have the color purple. Strike two notes,
You have a certain chord, and nature made me
By rules as mathematical as they use
In mixing drugs or gases. Then he'd say:
Look at this table, and he'd show to me
A diagram of chickens, how blue fowls
Come from a cross of black with one of white
With black splashed feathers. Look at the blues, he'd say.
They mate, and of four chickens, two are blue,
And one is black and one is white. These blues
Produce in that proportion. But the black
And white have chickens white and black, you see
In equal numbers. Don't you see that I
Was caught in mathematics, jotted down
Upon a slate before I came to earth?

They could have picked my forbears; on a slate
Forecast my soul, its tendencies, if they
Had been that devilish. And so he talked.

Well, then he heard that Elenor Murray died,
And told me that her grandmother, that woman
Known for her queerness and her lively soul
To eighty years and more, was grandmother
To his father, and this Elenor Murray cousin
To his father. There you have it, he exclaimed,
She killed herself, and I know why, he said
She loved someone. This love is in our blood,
And overflows, or spurts between the logs
You dam it with, or fully stayed grows green
With summer scum, breeds frogs and spotted snakes.

He was a study and I studied him.
I'd sit beside his cell and read some words
From his confession, ask why did you this?
His crime was monstrous, but he won me over.
I wished to help the boy, for boy he was
Just nineteen, and I pitied him. At last
His story seemed as clear as when you see
The truth behind poor words that say as much
As words can say — you see, you get the truth
And know it, even if you never pass
The truth to others.

Lord! This girl he killed
Knew not the power she played with. Why she sat

Like a child upon the asp's nest picking flowers.
Or as a child will pet a mad dog. Look
You come into my life, what do you bring?
Why, everything that made your life, all pains,
All raptures, disappointments, wisdom learned
You bring to me. But do you show them, no!
You hide them maybe, some of them, and leave
Myself to learn you by the hardest means,
And bing! A something in you, or in me,
Out of a past explodes, or better still
Extends a claw from out the buttoned coat
And rips a face.

So this poor girl was killed,
And by an innocent coquetry evoked
The claw that tore her breast away.

One day
As I passed by his cell I stopped and sat.
What was the first thing entering in your mind
From which you trace your act? And he said: "Well
Almost from the beginning all my mind
Was on her from the moment I awaked
Until I slept, and often I awoke
At two or three o'clock with thoughts of her.
And through the day I thought of nothing else;
Sometimes I could not eat. At school my thought
Stretched out of me to her, could not be pulled
Back to the lesson. I could read a page
As it were Greek, not understand a word.

But just the moment I was with her then
My soul re-entered me, I was at peace,
And happy, oh so happy! In the days
When we were separated my unrest
Took this form: that I must be with her, or
If that could not be, then some other place
Was better than the place I was — I strained,
Lived in a constant strain, found no content
With anything or place, could find no peace
Except with her."

"Right from the first I had
Two minds, two hearts concerning her, and one
Was confidence, and one was doubt, one love,
One hatred. And one purpose was to serve her,
Guard her and care for her, one said destroy,
Ruin or kill her. Sitting by her side,
Except as I shall say I loved her, trusted her,
Away from her, I doubted her and hated her.
But at the dances when I saw her smile
Up at another man, the storming blood
Roared in my brain for wondering about
The words they said. He might be holding her
Too close to him; or as I watched I saw
His knee indent her skirt between her knees,
That might be when she smiled. Then going home
I'd ask her what he said. She'd only smile
And keep a silence that I could not open
With any pry of questions."

CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

"Well, we quarreled,
About this boy she danced with. So I said:
I'll leave her, never see her, I'll go find
Another girl, forget her. Sunday next
I saw her driving with this fellow. I
Was walking in the road, they passed me laughing,
She turned about and waved her hand at me.
That night I lay awake and tossed and thought:
Where are they now? What are they doing now?
He's kissing her upon the lips I've kissed,
Or worse, perhaps, I have been fooled, she lies
Within his arms and gives him what for love
I never asked her, never dared to ask."
This brought Fred Taylor's story to the murder,
In point of madness, anyway. Some business
Broke in our visit here. Another time
I sat with him and questioned him again
About the night he killed her.

"Well," he said,
"I told you that we quarreled. So I fought
To free myself of thought of her — no use.
I tried another girl, it wouldn't work.
For at the dance I took this girl to, I
Saw Gertrude with this fellow, and the madness
Came over me in blackness, hurricanes,
Until I found myself in front of her,
Where she was seated, asking for a dance.
She smiled and rose and danced with me. And then
As the dance ended, May I come to see you,

I'm sorry for my words, came from my tongue,
In spite of will. She laughed and said to me:
'If you'll behave yourself.'"

"I went to see her,
But came away more wretched than I went.
She seemed to have sweet secrets, in her silence
And eyes too calm the secrets hid themselves.
At first I could not summon up the strength
To ask her questions, but at last I did.
And then she only shook her head and laughed,
And spoke of something else. She had a way
Of mixing up the subjects, till my mind
Forgot the very thing I wished to know,
Or dulled its edges so, if I remembered
I could not ask it so to bring the answer
I wished from her. I came away so weak
I scarce could walk, fell into sleep at once,
But woke at three o'clock, and could not sleep."

"Before this quarrel we had been engaged
And at this evening's end I brought it up:
'What shall we do? Are you engaged to me?
Will you renew it?' And she said to me:
'We still are young, it's better to be free.
Let's play and dance. Be gay, for if you will
I'll go with you, but when you're gloomy, dear,
You are not company for a girl.'"

CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

"Dear me!
Here was I five feet nine, and could have crushed
Her little body with my giant arms.
And yet in strength that counts, the mind that moves
The body, but much more can move itself,
And other minds, she was a spirit power,
And I but just a derrick slowly swung
By an engine smaller, noisy with its chug,
And cloudy with its smoke bituminous.
That night, however, she engaged to go
To dance with me a week hence. But meanwhile
The hellish thing comes, on the morning after.
Thus chum of mine, who testified, John Luce
Came to me with the story that this man
That Gertrude danced with, told him — O my God —
That Gertrude hinted she would come across,
Give him the final bliss. That was the proof
They brought out in the trial, as you know.
The fellow said it, damn him — whether she
Made such a promise, who knows? Would to God
I knew before you hang me. There I stood
And heard this story, felt my arteries
Lock as you'd let canal gates down, my heart
Beat for deliverance from the bolted streams.
That night I could not sleep, but found a book,
Just think of this for fate! Under my eyes
There comes an ancient story out of Egypt:
Thyamis fearing he would die and lose
The lovely Chariclea, strikes her dead,
Then kills himself, some thousands of years ago.

He said the mathematics of his birth
Accounted for his deed.

Is it not true?
If you resolved the question that the jury
Resolved, did he know right from wrong, did he
Know what he did, the jury answered truly
To give the rope to him. Or if you say
These mathematics may be true, and still
A man like that is better out of way,
And saying so become the very spirit,
And reason which slew Gertrude, disregarding
The devil of heredity which clutched him,
As he put by the reason we obey,
It may be well enough, I do not know.

Now for last night before this morning fixed
To swing him off. His lawyers went to see
The governor to win reprieval, perhaps
A commutation. I could see his eyes
Had two lights in them; one was like a lantern
With the globe greased, which showed he could not see
Himself in death tomorrow — what is that
In the soul that cannot see itself in death?
No to-morrow, continuation, the wall, the end!
And yet this very smear upon the globe
Was death's half fleshless hand which rubbed across
His senses and his hope. The other light
Was weirdly bright for terror, expectation
Of good news from the governor.

For his lawyers
Were in these hours petitioning. He would ask:
"No news? No word? What is the time?" His
tongue
Would fall back in his throat, we saw the strain
Of his stretched soul. He'd sit upon his couch
Hands clasped, head down. Arise and hold the bars,
Himself fling on the couch face down and shake.
But when he heard the hammers ring that nail
The scaffold into shape, he whirled around
Like a rat in a cage. And when the sand bag fell,
That tested out the rope, a muffled thug,
And the rope creaked, he started up and moaned
"You're getting ready," and his body shivered,
His white hands could not hold the bars, he reeled
And fell upon the couch again.

Suppose
There was no whiskey and no morphia,
Except for what the parsons think fit use,
A poor weak fellow — not a Socrates —
Must march the gallows, walk with every nerve
Up-bristled like a hair in fright. This night
Was much too horrible for me. At last
I had the doctor dope him unaware,
And for a time he slept.

But when the dawn
Looked through the little windows near the ceiling
Cob-webbed and grimed, with light like sanded water,

And echoes started in the corridors
Of feet and objects moved, then all at once
He sprang up from his sleep, and gave a groan,
Half yell, that shook us all.

A clergyman
Came soon to pray with him, and he grew calmer,
And said: "O pray for her, but pray for me
That I may see her, when this riddle-world
No longer stands between us, slipped from her
And soon from me."

For breakfast he took coffee,
A piece of toast, no more. The sickening hour
Approaches — he is sitting on his couch,
Bent over, head in hands, dazed, or in prayer.
My deputy reads the warrant — while I stand
At one side so to hear, but not to see.
And then my clerk comes quickly through the door
That opens from the office in the jail;
Runs up the iron steps, all out of breath,
And almost shouts: "The governor telephones
To stop; the sentence is commuted." Then
I grew as weak as the culprit — took the warrant,
And stepped up to the cell's door, coughed, inhaled,
And after getting breath I said: "Good news,
The governor has saved you."

Then he laughed,
Half fell against the bars, and like a rag
Sank in a heap.

CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

I don't know to this day
What moved the governor. For crazy men
Are hanged sometimes. To-day he leaves the jail.
We take him where the criminal insane
Are housed at our expense.

So Merival heard the sheriff. As he knew
The governor's mind, and how the governor
Gave heed to public thought, or what is deemed
The public thought, what's printed in the press,
He wondered at the governor. For no crime
Had stirred the county like this crime. And if
A jury and the courts adjudged this boy
Of nineteen in his mind, what was the right
Of interference by the governor?
So Merival was puzzled. They were chums,
The governor and Merival in old days.
Had known club-life together, ate and drank
Together in the days when Merival
Came to Chicago living down the hurt
He took from her who left him. In those days
The governor was struggling, Merival
Had helped with friends and purse — and later helped
The governor's ambition from the time
He went to congress. So the two were friends
With memories and secrets for the stuff
Of friendship, glad renewal of the surge
Of lasting friendship when they met.

And now
He sensed a secret, meant to bring it forth.
And telegraphed the governor, who said:
" I'll see you in Chicago." Merival
Went up to see the governor and talk.
They had not met for months for leisured talk.
And now the governor said: " I'll tell you all,
And make it like a drama. I'll bring in
My wife who figured in this murder case.
It was this way: It's nearly one o'clock,
I'm back from hearing lawyers plead. I wish
To make this vivid so you'll get my mind.
I tell you what I said to her. It's this: "

THE GOVERNOR

I'm home at last. How long were you asleep?
I startled you. The time? It's midnight past.
Put on your slippers and your robe, my dear,
And make some coffee for me — what a night!
Yes, tell you? I shall tell you everything.
I must tell someone, and a wife should know
The workings of a governor's mind — no one
Could guess what turned the scale to save this man
Who would have died to-morrow, but for me.
That's fine. This coffee helps me. As I said
This night has been a trial. Well, you know
I told these lawyers they could come at eight,

THE GOVERNOR

And so they came. A seasoned lawyer one,
The other young and radical, both full
Of sentiment of some sort. And there you sit,
And do not say a word of disapproval.
You smile, which means you sun yourself within
The power I have, and yet do you approve?
This man committed brutal murder, did
A nameless horror; now he's saved from death.
The father and the mother of the girl,
The neighborhood, perhaps, in which she lived
Will roar against me, think that I was bought,
Or used by someone I'm indebted to
In politics. Oh no! It's really funny,
Since it is simpler than such things as these.
And no one, saving you, shall know the secret.
For there I sat and didn't say a word
To indicate, betray my thought; not when
The thing came out that moved me. Let them read
The doctor's affidavits, that this man
Was crazy when he killed the girl, and read
The transcript of the evidence on the trial.
They read and talked. At last the younger lawyer,
For sometime still, kept silent by the other,
Pops out with something, reads an affidavit,
As foreign to the matter as a story
Of melodrama color on the screen,
Which still contained a sentence that went home;
I felt my mind turn like a turn-table,
And click as when the switchman kicks the tongue
Of steel into the slot that holds the table.

And from my mind the engine, that's the problem,
Puffed, puffed and moved away, out on the track,
And disappeared upon its business. How
Is that for metaphor? Your coffee, dear,
Stirs up my fancy. But to tell the rest,
If my face changed expression, or my eye
Betrayed my thought, then I have no control
Of outward seeming. For they argued on
An hour or so thereafter. And I asked
Re-reading of the transcript where this man
Told of his maniac passion, of the night
He killed the girl, the doctors' testimony
I had re-read, and let these lawyers think
My interest centered there, and my decision
Was based upon such matters, and at last
The penalty commuted. When in truth
I tell you I had let the fellow hang
For all of this, except that I took fire
Because of something in this affidavit
Irrelevant to the issue, reaching me
In something only relevant to me.
O, well, all life is such. Our great decisions
Flame out of sparks, where roaring fires before,
Not touching our combustibles wholly failed
To flame or light us.

Now the secret hear.
Do you remember all the books I read
Two years ago upon heredity,
Foot-notes to evolution, the dynamics

Of living matter? Well, it wasn't that
That made me save this fellow. There you smile
For knowing how and when I got these books,
Who woke my interest in them. Never mind,
You don't know yet my reasons.

But I'll tell you:
And let you see a governor's mind at work.
When this young lawyer in this affidavit
Read to a certain place my mind strayed off
And lived a time past, you were present too.
It was that morning when I passed my crisis,
Had just dodged death, could scarcely speak, too weak
To lift a hand to feed myself, but needed
Vital replenishment of strength, and then
I got it in a bowl of oyster soup,
Rich cream at that. And as I live, my dear,
As this young lawyer read, I felt myself
In bed as I lay then, re-lived the weakness,
Could see the spoon that carried to my mouth
The appetizing soup, imagined there
The feelings I had then of getting fingers
Upon the rail of life again, how faint,
But with such clear degrees. Could see the hand
That held the spoon, the eyes that looked at me
In triumph for the victory of my strength,
Which battled, almost lost the prize of life.
It all came over me when this lawyer read:
Elenor Murray lately come from France
Found dead beside the river, was the cousin

Of this Fred Taylor, and had planned to come
To see the governor, death prevented her —
Suppose it had?
That affidavit, doubtless
Was read to me to move me for the fact
This man was kindred to a woman who
Served in the war, this lawyer was that cheap!
And isn't it as cheap to think that I
Could be persuaded by the circumstance
That Elenor Murray, she who nursed me once,
Was cousin to this fellow, if this lawyer
Knew this, and did he know it? I don't know.
Had Elenor Murray lived she would have come
To ask her cousin's life — I know her heart.
And at the last, I think this was the thing:
I thought I'd do exactly what I'd do
If she had lived and asked me, disregard
Her death, and act as if she lived, repay
Her dead hands, which in life had saved my life.

Now, dear, your eyes have tears — I know — believe me,
I had no romance with this Elenor Murray.
Good Lord, it's one o'clock, I must to bed. . . .

You get my story Merival? Do you think,
A softness in the heart went to the brain
And softened that? Well now I stress two things:
I can't endure defeat, nor bear to see
An ardent spirit thwarted. What I've achieved
Has been through will that would not bend, and so

To see that in another wins my love,
And my support. Now take this Elenor Murray
She had a will like mine, she worked her way
As I have done. And just to hear that she
Had planned to see me, ask for clemency
For this condemned degenerate, made me say
Shall I let death defeat her? Take the breach
And make her death no matter in my course?
For as I live if she had come to me
I had done that I did. And why was that?
No romance! Never that! Yet human love
As friend can keep for friend in this our life
I felt for Elenor Murray — and for this:
It was her will that would not take defeat,
Devotion to her work, and in my case
This depth of friendship welling in her heart
For human beings, that I shared in — there
Gave tireless healing to her nursing hands
And saved my life. And for a life a life.
This criminal will live some years, we'll say,
Were better dead. All right. He'll cost the state
Say twenty thousand dollars. What is that
Contrasted with the cost to me, if I
Had let him hang? There is a bank account,
Economies in the realm of thought to watch.
And don't you think the souls — let's call them souls —
Of these avenging, law abiding folk,
These souls of the community all in all
Will be improved for hearing that I did
A human thing, and profit more therefrom

Than though that sense of balance in their souls
Struck for the thought of crime avenged, the law
Fulfilled and vindicated? Yes, it's true.
And Merival spoke up and said: "It's true,
I understand your story, and I'm glad.
It's like you and I'll tell my jury first,
And they will scatter it, what moved in you
And how this Elenor Murray saved a life."

The talk of waste in human life was constant
As Coroner Merival took evidence
At Elenor Murray's inquest. Everyone
Could think of waste in some one's life as well
As in his own.
John Scofield knew the girl,
Had worked for Arthur Fouche, her grandfather,
And knew what course his life took, how his fortune
Was wasted, dwindled down.

Remembering
A talk he heard between this Elenor Murray
And Arthur Fouche, her grandfather, he spoke
To Coroner Merival on the street one day:

JOHN SCOFIELD

You see I worked for Arthur Fouche, he said,
Until the year before he died; I knew

JOHN SCOFIELD

That worthless son of his who lived with him,
Born when his mother was past bearing time,
So born a weakling. When he came from college
He married soon and came to mother's hearth,
And brought his bride. I heard the old man say:
"A man should have his own place when he marries,
Not settle in the family nest"; I heard
The old man offer him a place, or offer
To buy a place for him. This baby boy
Ran quick to mother, cried and asked to stay.
What happened then? What always happens. Soon
This son began to edge upon the father,
And take the reins a little, Arthur Fouche
Was growing old. And at the last the son
Controlled the bank account and ran the farms;
And Mrs. Fouche gave up her place at table
To daughter-in-law, no longer served or poured
The coffee — so you see how humble beggars
Become the masters, it is always so.
Now this I know: When this boy came from school
And brought his wife back to the family place,
Old Arthur Fouche had twenty thousand dollars
On saving in the bank, and lots of money
Loaned out on mortgages. But when he died
He owed two thousand dollars at the bank.
Where did the money go? Why, for ten years
When Arthur Fouche and son were partners, I
Saw what went on, and saw this boy buy cattle
When beef was high, sell cattle when it was low,
And lose each year a little. And I saw

This boy buy buggies, autos and machinery,
And lose the money trading. So it was,
This worthless boy had nothing in his head
To run a business, which used up the fortune
Of Arthur Fouche, and strangled Arthur Fouche,
As vines destroy an oak tree. Well, you know
When Arthur Fouche's will was opened up
They found this son was willed most everything —
It's always so. The children who go out,
And make their way get nothing, and the son
Who stays at home by mother gets the swag.
And so this son was willed the family place
And sold it to that chiropractor — left
For California to remake his life,
And died there, after wasting all his life,
His father's fortune, too.

So, now to show you
How age breaks down a mind and dulls a heart,
I'll tell you what I heard:

This Elenor Murray
Was eighteen, just from High School, and one day
She came to see her grandfather and talked.
The old man always said he loved her most
Of all the grandchildren, and Mrs. Fouche
Told me a dozen times she thought as much
Of Elenor Murray as she did of any
Child of her own. Too bad they didn't show
Their love for her.

JOHN SCOFIELD

I was in and out the room
Where Elenor Murray and her grandfather
Were talking on that day, was planing doors
That swelled and wouldn't close. There was no secret
About this talk of theirs that I could see,
And so I listened.

Elenor began:
" If you can help me, grandpa, just a little
I can go through the university.
I can teach school in summer and can save
A little money by denying self.
If you can let me have two hundred dollars,
When school begins each year, divide it up,
If you prefer, and give me half in the fall,
And half in March, perhaps, I can get through.
And when I finish I shall go to work
And pay you back, I want it as a loan,
And do not ask it for a gift." She sat,
And fingered at her dress while asking him,
And Arthur Fouche looked at her. Come to think
He was toward eighty then. At last he said:
" I wish I could do what you ask me, Elenor,
But there are several things. You see, my child,
I have been through this thing of educating
A family of children, lived my life
In that regard, and so have done my part.
I sent your mother to St. Mary's, sent
The rest of them wherever they desired.
And that's what every father owes his children.

And when he does it, he has done his duty.
I'm sorry that your father cannot help you,
And I would help you, though I've done my duty
By those to whom I owed it; but you see
Your uncle and myself are partners buying
And selling cattle, and the business lags.
We do not profit much, and all the money
I have in bank is needed for this business.
We buy the cattle, and we buy the corn,
Then we run short of corn; and now and then
I have to ask the bank to lend us money,
And give my note. Last month I borrowed money!"
And so the old man talked. And as I looked
I saw the tears run down her cheeks. She sat
And looked as if she didn't believe him.

No,
Why should she? For I do not understand
Why in a case like this, a man who's worth,
Say fifty thousand dollars couldn't spare
Two hundred dollars by the year. Let's see:
He might have bought less corn or cattle, gambled
On lucky sales of cattle — there's a way
To do a big thing when you have the eyes
To see how big it is; and as for me,
If money must be lost, I'd rather lose it
On Elenor Murray than on cattle. In fact,
That's where the money went, as I have said.
And Elenor Murray went away and earned
Two terms at college, and this worthless son

GOTTLIEB GERALD

Ate up and spent the money. All of them,
The son and Arthur Fouche and Elenor Murray
Are gone to dust, now, like the garden things
That sprout up, fall and rot.

At times it seems
All waste to me, no matter what you do
For self or others, unless you think of turnips
Which can't be much to turnips, but are good
For us who raise them. Here's my story then,
Good wishes to you, Coroner Merival.

Coroner Merival heard that Gottlieb Gerald
Knew Elenor Murray and her family life;
And knew her love for music, how she tried
To play on the piano. On an evening
He went with Winthrop Marion to the place,—
Llewellyn George dropped in to hear, as well—
Where Gottlieb Gerald sold pianos—dreamed,
Read Kant at times, a scholar, but a failure,
His life a waste in business. Gottlieb Gerald
Spoke to them in these words:—

GOTTLIEB GERALD

I knew her, why of course. And you want me?
What can I say? I don't know how she died.
I know what people say. But if you want

To hear about her, as I knew the girl,
Sit down a minute. Wait, a customer! . . .
It was a fellow with a bill, these fellows
Who come for money make me smile. Good God!
Where shall I get the money, when pianos,
Such as I make, are devilish hard to sell?
Now listen to this tune! Dumm, dumm, dumm, dumm,
How's that for quality, sweet clear and pure?
Now listen to these chords I take from Bach!
Oh no, I never played much, just for self.
Well, you might say my passion for this work
Is due to this: I pick the wire strings,
The spruce boards and all that for instruments
That suit my ear at last. When I have built
A piano, then I sit and play upon it,
And find forgetfulness and rapture through it.
And well I need forgetfulness, for the bills
Are never paid, collectors always come.
I keep a little lawyer almost busy,
Lest some one get a judgment, levy a writ
Upon my prizes here, this one in chief.
Oh, well, I pay at last, I always pay,
But I must have my time. And in the days
When these collectors swarm too much I find
Oblivion in music, run my hands
Over the keys I've tuned. I wish I had
Some life of Cristofori, just to see
If he was dodging bills when tuning strings.
Perhaps that Silberman who made pianos
For Frederick the Great had money enough,

And needed no oblivion from bills.
You see I'm getting old now, sixty-eight;
And this I say, that life is far too short
For man to use his conquests and his wisdoms.
This spirit, mind, is a machine, piano,
And has its laws of harmony and use.
Well, it seems funny that a man just learns
The secrets of his being, how to love,
How to forget, what to select, what life
Is natural to him, and only living
According to one's nature is increase —
All else is waste — when wind blows on your back,
Just as I sit sometimes when these collectors
Come in on me — and so you find it's Death,
Who levies on your life; no little lawyer
Can keep him off with stays of execution,
Or supersedeas, I think it is.
Well, as I said, a man must live his nature,
And dump the rules; this Christianity
Makes people wear steel corsets to grow straight,
And they don't grow so, for they scarcely breathe,
They're laced so tight; and all their vital organs
Are piled up and repressed until they groan.
Then what? They lace up tighter, till the blood
Stops in the veins and numbness comes upon them.
Oblivion it may be — but give me music!

Oh yes, this girl, Elenor Murray, well
This talk about her home is half and half,
Part true, part false. Her daddy nips a little,

Has always done so. Like myself, the bills
Have always deviled him. But just the same
That home was not so bad. Some years ago,
She was a little girl of thirteen maybe,
Her father rented one of my pianos
For Elenor to learn on, and of course
The rent was always back, I didn't care,
Except for my collectors, and besides
She was so nice. So music hungry, practiced
So hard to learn, I used to let the rent
Run just as long as I could let it run.
And even then I used to feel ashamed
To ask her father for it.

As I said
She was thirteen, and one Thanksgiving day
They asked me there to dinner, and I went,
Brushed off my other coat and shaved myself,
I looked all right, my shoes were polished too.
You'd never think I polished them to look
At these to-day. And now I tell you what
I saw myself: nice linen on the table,
And pretty silver, plated, I suppose;
Good glass-ware, and a dinner that was splendid,
Wine made from wild grapes spiced with cinnamon,
It had a kick, too. And the home was furnished
Like what you'd think: good carpets, chairs, a lounge,
Some pictures on the wall — all good enough.
And this girl was as lively as a cricket,
She was the liveliest thing I ever saw;

And that's what ailed her, if you want my word.
She had more life than she knew how to use,
And had not learned her own machine.

And after
We had the dinner we came in the parlor.
And then her mother asked her to play something,
And she sat down and played tra-la; tra-la,
One of these waltzes, I remember now
As pretty as these verses in the paper
On love, or something sentimental. Yes,
She played it well. For I had rented them
One of my pets. They asked me then to play
And I tried out some Bach and other things,
And improvised. And Elenor stood by,
And asked what's that when I was improvising.
I laughed and said, Sonata of Starved Rock,
Or Deer Park Glen in Winter, anything —
She looked at me with eyes as big as that.

Well, as I said, the home was good enough.
Still like myself with these collectors, Elenor
Was bothered, drawn aside, and scratched no doubt
From walking through the briars. Just the same
The trouble with her life, if it was trouble,
And no musician would regard it trouble,
The trouble was her nature strove to be
All fire, and subtilize to the essence of fire,
Which was her nature's law, and Nature's law,

The only normal law, as I have found;
For so Canudo says, as I read lately,
Who gave me words for what I knew from life.

Now if you want my theories I go on.
You do? All right. What was this Elenor Murray?
She was the lover, do you understand?
She had her lovers maybe, I don't know,
That's not the point with lovers, any more,
Than it's the point to have pianos — no!
Lovers, pianos are the self-same thing;
Instruments for the soul, the source of fire,
The crucible for flames that turn from red
To blue, then white, then fierce transparencies.
Then if the lover be not known by lovers
How is she known? Why think of Elenor Murray,
Who tries all things and educates herself,
Goes traveling, would sing and play, becomes
A member of a church with ritual, music,
Incense and color, things that steal the senses,
And bring oblivion. Don't you see the girl
Moving her soul to find her soul, and passing
Through loves and hatreds, seeking everywhere
Herself she loved, in others, agonizing
For hate of father, so they tell me now?
But first because she hated in herself
What lineaments of her father she saw in self.
And all the while, I think, she strove to conquer
This hatred, every hatred, sensing freedom
For her own soul through liberating self

From hatreds. So, you see how someone near,
Repugnant, disesteemed, may furnish strength
And vision, too, by gazing on that one
From day to day, not to be like that one:
And so our hatreds help us, those we hate
Become our saviors.

Here's the problem now
In finding self, the soul — it's with ourselves,
Within ourselves throughout the ticklish quest
From first to last, and lovers and pianos
Are instruments of salvation, yet they take
The self but to the self, and say now find,
Explore and know. And then, as all before,
The problem is how much of mind to use,
How much of instinct, phototropic sense,
That turns instinctively to light — green worms
More plant than animal are eyes all over
Because their bodies know the light, no eyes
Where sight is centralized. I've found it now:
What is the intellect but eyes, where sight
Is gathered in two spheres? The more they're used
The darker is the body of the soul.
Now to digress, that's why the Germans lost,
They used the intellect too much; they took
The sea of life and tried to dam it in,
Or use it for canals or water power,
Or make a card-case system of it, maybe,
To keep collectors off, have all run smoothly,
And make a sure thing of it.

To return
How much did Elenor Murray use her mind,
How much her instincts, leave herself alone
Let nature have its way? I think I know:

But first you have the artist soul; and next
The soul half artist, prisoned usually
In limitations where the soul, half artist
Between depressions and discouragements
Rises in hope and knocks. Why, I can tell them
The moment they touch keys or talk to me.
I hear their knuckles knocking on the walls,
Insuperable partitions made of wood,
When seeking tones or words; they have the hint,
But cannot open, manifest themselves.
So was it with this girl, she was all lover,
Half artist, what a torture for a soul,
And what escape for her! She could not play,
Had never played, no matter what the chance.
I think there is no curse like being dumb
When every waking moment, every dream
Keeps crying to speak out. This is her case:
The girl was dumb, like that dumb woman here
Whose dress caught fire, and in the dining room
Was burned to death while all her family
Were in the house, to whom she could not cry!

You asked about her going to the war,
Her sacrifice in that, and if I think
She found expression there — yes, of a kind,

But not the kind she hungered for, not music.
She found adventure there, excitement too.
That uses up the soul's power, takes the place
Of better self-expression. But you see
I do not think self-immolation life,
I know it to be death. Now, look a minute:
Why did she join the church? why to forget!
Why did she go to war? why to forget.
And at the last, this thing called sacrifice
Rose up with meaning in her eyes. You see
They tell around here now she often said:
" I'm going to the war to be swept under."
Now comes your Christian idea: Let me die,
But die in service of the race, in giving
I waste myself for others, give myself!
Let God take notice, and reward the gift!
This is the failure's recourse often-times,
A prodigal flinging of the self — let God
Find what He can of good, or find all good.
I have abandoned all control, all thought
Of finding my soul otherwise, if here
I find my soul, a doubt that makes the gift
Not less abandoned.

This is foolish talk
I know you think, I think it is myself,
At least in part. I know I'm right, however,
In guessing off the reason of her failure,
If failure it is. But pshaw, why talk of failure
About a woman born to live the life

She lived, which could not have been different,
Much different under any circumstance?
She might have married, had a home and children,
What of it? As it is she makes a story,
A flute sound in our symphony — all right!
And I confess, in spite of all I've said,
The profit, the success, may not be known
To any but one's self. Now look at me,
By all accounts I am a failure — look!
For forty years just making poor ends meet,
My love all spent in making good pianos.
I thrill all over picking spruce and wires,
And putting them together — all my love
Gone into this, no head at all for business.
I keep no books, they cheat me out of rent.
I don't know how to sell pianos, when
I sell one I have trouble oftentimes
In getting pay for it. But just the same
I sit here with myself, I know myself,
I've found myself, and when collectors come
I can say come to-morrow, turn about,
And run the scale, or improvise, and smile,
Forget the world!

The three arose and left.
Llewellyn George said: "That's a rarity,
That man is like a precious flower you find
Way off among the weeds and rocky soil,
Grown from a seed blown out of paradise;
I want to call again."

LILLI ALM

So thus they knew
This much of Elenor Murray's music life.
But on a day a party talk at tea,
Of Elenor Murray and her singing voice
And how she tried to train it — just a riffle
Which passed unknown of Merival. For you know
Your name may come up in a thousand places
At earth's ends, though you live, and do not die
And make a great sensation for a day.
And all unknown to Merival for good
This talk of Lilli Alm and Ludwig Haibt:

LILLI ALM

In Lola Schaefer's studio in the Tower,
Tea being served to painters, poets, singers,
Herr Ludwig Haibt, a none too welcome guest,
Of vital body, brisk, too loud of voice,
And Lilli Alm crossed swords.

It came about
When Ludwig Haibt said: "Have you read the papers
About this Elenor Murray?" And then said:
"I tried to train her voice — she was a failure."
And Lilli Alm who taught the art of song
Looked at him half contemptuous and said:
"Why did she fail?" To which Herr Ludwig answered
"She tried too hard. She made her throat too tense,

And made its muscles stiff by too much thought,
Anxiety for song, the vocal triumph."

" O, yes, I understand," said Lilli Alm.
Then stabbing him she added, " since you dropped
The Perfect Institute, and dropped the idea
Which stresses training muscles of the tongue,
And all that thing, be fair and shoulder half
The failure of poor Elenor Murray on
Your system's failure. For I chanced to know
The girl myself. She started work with me,
And I am sure that if I had been able —
With time enough I could have done it too —
To rid her mind of muscles and to fix
The thought alone of music in her mind,
She would have sung. Now listen, Ludwig Haibt,
You've come around to see that song's the thing.
I take a pupil and I say to her:
The mind must fix itself on music, say
I would make song, pure tones and beautiful;
That comes from spirit, from the Plato rapture,
Which gets the idea. It is well to know
Some physiology, I grant, to know
When, how to move the vocal organs, feel
How they are moving, through the ear to place
These organs in relation, and to know
The soft palate is drawn against the hard;
The tongue can take positions numerous,
Can be used at the root, a throaty voice;
Or with the tip, produce expressiveness.

But what must we avoid? — rigidity.
And if that girl was over-zealous, then
So much the more her teaching should have kept
Mind off the larynx and the tongue, and fixed
Upon the spiritual matters, so to give
The snake-like power of loosening, contracting
The muscles used for singing. Ludwig Haibt,
I can forgive your system, since abandoned,
I can't forgive your words to-day who say
This woman failed for trying over much,
When I know that your system made her throw
An energy truly wonderful on muscles;
And when I think of your book where you said:
The singing voice is the result, observe
Of physical conditions, like the strings
Or tubes of brass. While granting that it's well
To know the art of tuning up the strings,
And how to place them; after all the art
Of tuning and of placing comes from mind,
The idea, and the art of making song
Is just the breathing of the perfect spirit
Upon the strings. The throat is but the leaves,
Let them be flexible, the mouth's the flower,
The tone the perfume. And your olden way
Of harping on the larynx — well, since you
Turned from it, I'm ungenerous perhaps
To scold you thus to-day.

But this I say,
Let us be frank as teachers: Take the fetich

Of breathing and see how you cripple talent,
Or take that matter of the laryngyscope,
Whereby you photograph a singer's throat,
Caruso's, Galli Curci's at the moment
Of greatest beauty in song, and thus preserve
In photographs before you how the muscles
Looked and were placed that moment. Then attempt
To get the like effect by placing them
In similar fashion. Oh, you know, Herr Ludwig,
These fetiches go by. One thing remains:
The idea in the soul of beauty, music,
The hope to give it forth.

Alas! to think
So many souls are wasted while we teach
This thing or that. The strong survive, of course.
But take this Elenor Murray — why, that girl
Was just a flame, I never saw such hunger
For self-development, and beauty, richness,
In all experience in life — I knew her,
That's why I say so — take her as I say,
And put her to a practice — yours we'll say —
Where this great zeal she had is turned and pressed
Upon the physical, just the very thing
To make her throat constrict, and fill her up
With over anxiety and make her fail.
When had she come to me at first this passion
Directed to the beauty, the idea
Had put her soul at ease to ease her body,

Which gradually and beautifully had answered
That flame of hers.

Well, Ludwig Haibt, you're punished
For wasting several years upon a system
Since put away as half erroneous,
If not quite worthless. But I must confess,
Since I have censured you, to my own sin.
This girl ran out of money, came to me
And told me so. To which I said: "Too bad,
You will have money later, when you do,
Come back to me." She stood a silent moment,
Her hand upon the knob, I saw her tears,
Just little dim tears, then she said good-bye
And vanished from me.

Well, I now repent.
I who have thought of beauty all my life,
And taught the art of sound made beautiful,
Let slip a chance for beauty — why, I think,
A beauty just as great as song! You see
I had a chance to serve a hungering soul —
I could have said just let the money go,
Or let it go until you get the money.
I let that chance for beauty slip. Even now
I see poor Elenor Murray at the door,
Who paused, no doubt, in hope that I would say
What I thought not to say.

So, Ludwig Haibt,
We are a poor lot — let us have some tea!
" We are a poor lot," Ludwig Haibt replied.
" But since this is confessional, I absolve you,
If you'll permit me, from your sin. Will you
Absolve me, if I say I'm sorry too?
I'll tell you something, it is really true: —
I changed my system more I think because
Of what I learned from teaching Elenor Murray
Than on account of any other person.
She demonstrated better where my system
Was lacking than all pupils that I had.
And so I changed it; and of course I say
The thing is music, just as poets say
The thing is beauty, not the rhyme and words,
With which they bring it, instruments that's all,
And not the thing — but beauty."

So they talked,
Forgave each other. And that very day
Two priests were talking of confessionals
A mile or so from the Tower, where Lilli Alm
And Ludwig Haibt were having tea. You say
The coroner was ignorant of this!
What is the part it plays with Elenor Murray?
Or with the inquest? Wait a little yet
And see if Merival has told to him
What thing of value touching Elenor Murray
Is lodged in Father Whimsett's heart or words.

FATHER WHIMSETT

Looking like Raphael's Perugino, eyes
So slightly, subtly aquiline, as brown
As a buck-eye, amorous, flamed, but lightly dimmed
Through thought of self while sitting for the artist;
A nose well bridged with bone for will, the nostrils
Distended as if sniffing diaphanous fire;
A very bow for lips, the under lip
Rich, kissable like a woman's; heavy cheeks
Propped with a rounded tower of flesh for neck:
Thus Perugino looked, says Raphael,
And thus looked Father Whimsett at his desk,
With vertical creases, where the nose and brow
Together come, between the eye-brows slanting
Unequally, half clown-wise, half Mephisto,
With just a touch of that abandoned humor,
And laughter at the world, the race of men,
Mephisto had for mischief, which the priest
Has for a sense which looks upon the dream
And smiles, yet pities those who move in it.
And Father Whimsett smokes and reads and smiles.
He soon will hold confessional. For days
He has heard nothing but complaints of lovers,
And searched for nullities, impediments,
Through which to give sore stricken hearts relief:
There was the youth too drunk to know he married
A woman never baptized. Now the youth
Has found another — oh this is the one!

And comes and says: Oh, holy father, help me,
May I be free to marry her I love,
And get the church's blessing when a court
Dissolves the civil contract? Holy Father,
I knew not what I did, cannot remember
Where I was married, when, my mind's a blank —
It was the drink, you know.

And so it goes,
The will is eyeless through concupiscence,
And that absolves the soul that's penitent.
And Father Whimsett reads his Latin books,
Searches for subtleties for faithful souls,
Whereby the faithful souls may have their wish,
Yet keep the gospel, too.

These Latin books
Leave him fatigued, but not fatigued to turn
Plotinus, Xenophon, Boccacio,
Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris.
And just this moment Father Whimsett reads
Catullus, killing time, before he hears
Confession, gets the music of Catullus
Along the light that enters at the eye:
Etherial strings plucked by the intellect
To vibrate to the inner ear. At times
He must re-light his half-forgot cigar.
And while the music of the Latin verse,
Which is an echo, as he stops to light
His half-forgot cigar, is wafted through

FATHER WHIMSETT

His meditation, as a tune is heard
After the keys are stayed, it blends, becomes
The soul, interpretation of these stories,
Which lovers tell him in these later days.
And now the clock upon the mantel chimes
The quarter of the hour. Up goes Catullus
By Ovid on the shelf. The dead cigar
Is thrown away. He rises from the chair —
When Father Conway enters, just to visit
Some idle moments, smoke and have a talk.
And Father Whimsett takes his seat again,
Waves Father Conway to a comfort chair,
Says " Have a smoke," and Father Conway smokes,
And sees Catullus, says you read Catullus,
And lays the morning *Times* upon the table,
And says to Father Whimsett: " Every day
The *Times* has stories better than Catullus,
And episodes which Horace would have used.
I wish we had a poet who would take
This city of Chicago, write it up,
The old Chicago, and the new Chicago,
The race track, old cafés and gambling places,
The prize fights, wrestling matches, sporting houses,
As Horace wrote up Rome. Or if we had
A Virgil he would find an epic theme
In this American matter, typical
Of our America, one phase or more
Concerning Elenor Murray. Here to-day
There is a story, of some letters found
In Arthur Fouche's mansion, under the floor,

Sensational, dramatic.

Father Whimsett
Looked steadily at Father Conway, blew
A funnel of tobacco smoke and said:
I scarcely read the *Times* these days, too busy —
I've had a run of rich confessionals.
The war is ended, but they still come on,
And most are lovers in the coils of love.
I had one yesterday that made me think
Of one I had a year ago last spring,
The point was this: they say forgive me father,
For I have sinned, then as the case proceeds
A greater sin comes forth, I mean the sin
Of saying sin is good, cannot be sin:
I loved the man, or how can love be sin?
Well, as a human soul I see the point,
But have no option, must lay to and say
Acknowledgment, contrition and the promise
To sin no more, is necessary to
Win absolution. Now to show the matter,
Here comes a woman, says I leave for France
To serve, to die. I have a premonition
That I shall die abroad; or if I live,
I have had fears, I shall be taken, wronged,
So driven by this honor to destroy
Myself, goes on and says, I tell you all
These fears of mine that you may search my heart,
More gladly may absolve me. Then she says,
These fears worked in my soul until I took

The step which I confess, before I leave.
I wait and she proceeds:

"O, holy father,
There is a man whom I have loved for years,
These five years past, such hopeless, happy years.
I love him and he loves me, holy father.
He holds me sacred as his wife, he loves me
With the most holy love. It cannot be
That any love like ours is guilty love,
Can have no other quality than good,
If it be love."

Well, here's a pretty soul
To sit in the confessional! So I say,
Why do you come to me? Loving your sin,
Confessing it, denying it in one breath,
Leaves you in sin without forgiveness.
Well, then she tacks about and says "I sinned,
And I am sorry. Wait a minute, father,
And see the flesh and spirit mixed again."
She wants to tell me all, I let her go.
And so she says: "His wife's an invalid,
Has been no wife to him. Besides," she says —
Now watch this thrust to pierce my holy shield —
"She is not in the church's eye his wife,
She never was baptized"— I almost laughed,
But answered her, You think adultery
Is less adultery in a case like this?
"Well, no," she says, "but could he be divorced

The church would marry us." Go on, I said,
And then she paused a little and went on:
" I said I loved this man, and it is true,
And years ago I gave myself to him,
And then his wife found out there was a woman —
But not that I was the woman — years ago
At confirmation I confessed it all,
Need only say this time I gave him up,
And crushed him out with work — was chaste for years.
And then I met a man, a different man
Who stirred me otherwise, kept after me.
At last I weakened, sinned three months ago,
And suffered for it. For he took me, left me.
As if he wanted body of me alone,
And was not pleased with that. And after that,
I think that I was mad, a furious passion
Was kindled by this second man, and left
With nothing to employ its flame. Two weeks
Went by, he did not seek me out, none knew
The hour of our departure. Then I thought
How little I had been to this first lover,
And of the years when I denied him — so
To recompense his love, to serve him, father,
Yes, to allay this passion newly raised
By this new lover, whom I thought I loved,
I went to my old lover, free of will,
And took his lips and said to him, O take me,
I am yours to do with as you choose to-night.
He turned as pale as snow and shook with fear,
His heart beat in this throat. I terrified him

With this great will of mine in this small body.
I went on while he stood there by the window,
His back toward me. Make me wholly yours,
Take no precaution, prudence throw away
As mean, unworthy. Let your life precede,
Forestall the intruder's, if one be. And if
A child must be, yours shall it be."

"He turned,
And took me in his arms. . . ."

"And so to make
As nearly as might be a marriage, father,
I took — but let me tell you: I had thought
His wife might die at any time, so thinking
During these years I had bought bridal things;
A veil, embroideries, silk lingerie.
And I took to our room my negligee,
Boudoir cap, satin slippers, so to make
All beautiful as we were married, father.
How have I sinned? I cannot deem it wrong.
Do I not soil my soul with penitence,
And smut this loveliness with penitence?
Can I regret my work, nor take a hurt
Upon my very soul? How keep it clean
Confessing what I did (if I thought so)
As evil and unclean?"

The devil again
Entered with casuistry, as you perceive.

And so to make an end, I said to her,
You must bring to this sacrament a heart
Contrite and humble, promise me beside
To sin no more. The case is in your hands,
You can confess with lips, deny with heart,
God only knows, I don't, it's on your soul
To speak the truth or lie to me. Confess
And I'll absolve you.— For in truth my heart
Was touched by what she said, her lovely voice.

But now the story deepened. For she said,
I have not told you all. And she renewed:
" Suppose you pack your trunk and have your lunch,
Go to the station, but no train arrives,
And there you wait and wait, until you're hungry,
And nothing to do but wait, no place to lunch,
You cannot leave the station, lest the train
Should come while you are gone. Well, so it was,
The weeks went by, and still we were not called.
And I had closed my old life, sat and waited
The time of leaving to begin new life.
And after I had sinned with my first lover,
Parted from him, said farewell, ended it,
Could not go back to him, at least could think
Of no way to return that would not dull
The hour we lived together, look, this man,
This second lover looks me up again
And overwhelms me with a flaming passion.
It seemed he had thought over what I was,
Become all fire for me. He came to me,

And said, I love you, love you, looked at me,
And I could see the love-light in his eyes,
The light that woman knows. Well, I was weak,
Lonely and bored. He stirred my love besides;
And then a curious thought came in my brain:
The spirit is not found save through the flesh,
O holy father, and I thought to self,
Bring, as you may, these trials close together
In point of time and see where spirit is,
Where flesh directs to spirit most. And so
I went with him again, and found in truth
I loved him, he was mine and I was his,
We two were for each other, my old lover
Was just my love's beginning, not my love
Fully and wholly, rapturously, this man
Body and spirit harmonized with me.
I found him through the love of my old lover,
And knew by contrast, memory of the two
And this immediate comparison
Of spirits and of bodies, that this man
Who left me, whom I turned from to the first,
As I have tried to tell you, was the one.
O holy father, he is married, too.
And as I leave for France this ends as well;
No child in me from either. I confess
That I have sinned most grievously, I repent
And promise I shall sin no more."

And so,
I gave her absolution. Well, you see

The church was dark, but I knew who it was,
I knew the voice. She left. Another penitent
Entered with a story. What is this?
Here is a woman who's promiscuous.
Tried number one and then tries number two,
And comes and tells me, she has taken proof,
Weighed evidence of spirit and of body,
And thinks she knows at last, affirms as much.
Such conduct will not do, that's plain enough,
Not even if the truth of love is known
This way, no other way.

Then Father Conway
Began as follows: "I've a case like that,
A woman married, but she found her husband
Was just the cup of Tantulus and so. . . ."

But Father Whimsett said, "Why, look at that,
I'm over-due a quarter of an hour.
Come in to-morrow, father, tell me then."
The two priests rose and left the room together.

JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

Carl Eaton and John Campbell both were raised
With Elenor Murray in LeRoy. The mother
Of Eaton lived there; but these boys had gone,
Now grown to manhood to Chicago, where

They kept the old days of companionship.
And Mrs. Eaton saw the coroner,
And told him how she saved her son from Elenor,
And broke their troth — because upon a time
Elenor Murray, though betrothed, to Carl
Went riding with John Campbell, and returned
At two o'clock in the morning, drunk, and stood
Helpless and weary, holding to the gate.
For which she broke the engagement of her son
To Elenor Murray. That was truth to her,
And truth to Merival, for the time, at least.
But this John Campbell and Carl Eaton meet
One evening at a table drinking beer,
And talk about the inquest, Elenor;
Since much is published in the *Times* to stir
Their memories of her. And John speaks up:
" Well, Carl, now Elenor Murray is no more,
And we are friends so long, I'd like to know
What do you think of her? "

" About the time,
That May before she finished High School, Elenor
Broke loose, ran wild, do you remember, Carl?
She had some trouble in her home, I heard —
She told me so. That Alma Bell affair
Made all the fellows wonder, as you know,
What kind of game she was, if she was game
For me, or you, or anyone. Besides
She had flirting eye, a winning laugh,
And she was eighteen, and a cherry ripe.

This Alma Bell affair and ills at home
Made her spurt up and dart out like a fuse
Which burns to powder wet and powder heated
Until it burns; she burned, you see, and stopped
When principles or something quenched the flame.
I walked with her from school a time or two,
When she was hinting, flirting with her eyes,
I know it now, but what a dunce I was,
As most men when they're twenty."

"Well, now listen!
A little later on an evening,
I see her buggy riding with Roy Green,
That rake, do you remember him, deadbeat,
Half drunkard then, corrupted piece of flesh?
She sat up in defiance by his side,
Her chin stuck out to tell the staring ones:
Go talk or censure to your heart's content.
And people stood and stared to see her pass
And shook their heads and wondered."

"Afterward
I learned from her this was the night at home
Her father and her mother had a quarrel.
Her mother asked her father to buy Elenor
A new dress for commencement, and the father
Was drinking and rebuffed her, so they quarreled.
And rode with him to shame her father, coming
After a long ride in the country home
At ten o'clock or so."

"Well, then I thought,
If she will ride with Roy Green, I go back
To hinting and to flirting eyes and guess
The girl will ride with me, or something more.
So I begin to circle round the girl,
And walk with her, and take her riding too.
She drops Roy Green for me — what does he care?
He's had enough of her or never cared —
Which is it? there's the secret for a man
As long as women interest him — who knows
What the precedent fellow was to her?
Roy Green takes to another and another.
He died a year ago, as you'll remember,
What were his secrets, agony? he seemed
A man to me who lived and never thought."

"So Elenor Murray went with me. Oh, well,
She gave me kisses, let me hold her tight,
We used to stop along the country ways
And kiss as long as we had breath to kiss,
And she would gasp and tremble."

"Then, at last
A chum I had began to laugh at me,
For, I was now in love with Elenor Murray.
Don't let her make a fool of you, he said,
No girl who ever traveled with Roy Green
Was not what he desired her, nor, before
The kind of girl he wanted. Don't you know
Roy Green is laughing at you in his sleeve,

And boasts that Elenor Murray was all his?
You see that stung me, for I thought at twenty
Girls do not go so far, that only women
Who sell themselves do so, or now and then
A girl who is betrayed by hopes of marriage.
And here was thrust upon me something devilish:
The fair girl that I loved was wise already,
And fooling me, and drinking in my love
In mockery of me. This was my first
Heart sickness, jaundice of the soul — dear me!
And how I suffered, lay awake of nights,
And wondered, doubted, hoped, or cursed myself,
And cursed the girl as well. And I would think
Of flirting eyes and hints and how she came
To me before she went with this Roy Green.
And I would hear the older men give hints
About their conquests, speak of ways and signs
From which to tell a woman. On the train
Hear drummers boast and drop apothogems;
The woman who drinks with you will be yours;
Or she who gives herself to you will give
To someone else; you know the kind of talk?
Where wisdom of the sort is averaged up,
But misses finer instances, the beauties
Among the million phases of the thing.
And, so at last I thought the girl was game.
And had been snared, already. Why should I
Be just a cooing dove, why not a hawk?
We were out riding on a summer's night,
A moon and all the rest, the scent of flowers,

And many kisses, as on other times.
At last with this sole object in my mind
Long concentrated, purposed, all at once
I found myself turned violent, with hands
At grapple, twisting, forcing, and this girl
In terror pleading with me. In a moment
When I took time for breath, she said to me:
'I will not ride with you — you let me out.'
To which I said: 'You'll do what I desire
Or you can walk ten miles back to LeRoy,
And find Roy Green, you like him better, maybe.'
And she said: 'Let me out,' and she jumped out,
And would not ride with me another step,
Though I repented saying, come and ride.
I think it was a mile or more I drove
The horse slowed up to keep her company,
And then I cracked the whip and hurried on,
And left her walking, looked from time to time
To see her in the roadway, then drove on
And reached LeRoy, which Elenor reached that morning
At one or two."

"Well, then what was the riddle?
Was she in love with Roy Green yet, was she
But playing with me, was I crude, left handed,
Had she changed over, was she trying me
To fasten in the hook of matrimony,
Or was she good, and all this corner talk
Of Roy Green just the dirt of dirty minds?
You know the speculations, and you know

How they befuddle one at twenty years.
And sometimes I would grieve for what I did;
Then harden and laugh down my softness. But
At last I wrote a note to Elenor Murray
And sent it with a bouquet — but no word
Came back from Elenor Murray. Then I thought:
Here is a girl who rides with that Roy Green
And what would he be with her for, I ask?
And if she wants to make a cause of war
Out of an attitude she half provoked,
Why let her — and moreover let her go.
And so I dropped the matter, since she dropped
My friendship from that night."

"But later on,
Two years ago, when she came back to town
From somewhere, I don't know, gone many months,
Grown prettier, more desirable, I sent
Some roses to her in a tender mood
As if to say: We're grown up since that night,
Have you forgotten it, as I remember
How womanly you were, have grown to be?
She wrote me just a little note of thanks,
And what is strange that very day I learned
About your interest in her, learned besides
It prospered for some months before. I turned
My heart away for good, as a man might
Who plunges and beholds the woman smile
And take another's arm and walk away."

"So, that's your story, is it?" said Carl Eaton.
"Well, I had married her except for you!
That bunch of roses spoiled the girl for me.
You had Roy Green, dog-fennel, I had roses,
And I am glad you sent them, otherwise
I might have married her, to find at last
A wife just like her mother is, myself
Living her father's life, for something missed
Or hated in me — not the want of money.
She liked me as the banker's son, be sure,
And let me go unwillingly."

"But listen:
I called on her the night you sent the roses,
And there she had them on the center table,
And twinkled with her eyes, and spoke of them,
And said, I can remember it, you sent
Such lovely roses to her, you and she
Had been good friends for years — and now it seems
You were not friends — I didn't know it then.
But think about it, John! What was this woman?
It's clear her fate, found dead there by the river,
Is just the outward mirror of herself,
And had to be. There's not a thing in life
That is not first enacted in the heart.
Our fate is the reflection of the life
Which goes on in the heart. That girl was doomed,
Lived in her heart a life that found a birth,
Grew up, committed matricide at last,
Not that my love had saved her. But explain

Why would she over-stress the roses, give
Me understandings foreign to the truth?
For truth to tell, we were affianced then,
There were your roses! But above it all
Something she said pricked like a rose's thorn,
Something that grew to thought she cherished you,
Kept memories sweet of you. If that were true,
What was the past? What was I after all?
A second choice, as if I bought a car,
But thought about a car I wanted more.
So I retired that night in serious thought."

"Yet if you'll credit me, I had not heard
About this Alma Bell affair, or heard
About her riding through the public streets
With this Roy Green. I think I was away,
I never heard it anyway, I know
Until my mother told me, and she told me
Next morning after I had found your roses.
I hadn't told my mother, nor a soul
Before, that time that we two were engaged —
I didn't tell her then — I merely asked
Would Elenor Murray please you as a daughter?
You should have seen my mother — how she gasped,
And gestured losing breath, to say at last:
'Why, Carl, my boy, what are you thinking of?
You have not promised marriage to that girl?
Now tell me, have you?' Then I lied to her;
And laughed a little, answered no, and asked,
'What do you know about her?'"

JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

"Here's a joke,
With terror in it, John, if you have told
The truth to me — my mother tells me there
That on a time John Campbell — that is you,
And Elenor Murray rode into the country,
And that at two o'clock, or so, the girl
Is seen beside the gate post holding on,
And reeling up the side-walk to her door.
The girl was tired, if you have told the truth.
My mother warms up to this scoundrel Green,
And tops the matter off with Alma Bell.
And all the love I had for Elenor Murray
Sours in my heart. And then I tell my mother
The truth — of our engagement — promise her
To break it off. I did so on that day.
Got back the solitaire — but Elenor
Hung to me, asked my reasons, kept the ring
Until I wrote so sternly she gave up
Her hope and me."

"But worst of all, John Campbell —
If this be worst — this early episode
So nipped my leaves and browned and curled them up
To whisper sharply with their bitter edges,
No one has seen a bridal wreath in me;
Nor have I ever known a woman since
That some analysis did not blow cool
A rising admiration."

"Now to think
This girl lies dead, and while we drink a beer
You tell me that the story is a lie,
The girl was good, walked ten miles through the dark
To save her honor from a ruffian —
That's what you were, as you confess it now.
And if she did that, what is all this talk
Of such a rat as Green, of Alma Bell? —
It isn't true."

"The only truth is this:
I took a lasting poison from a lie,
Which built the very cells of me to resist
The thought of marriage — poison which remains.
I wonder should I tell the coroner?
No good in that — you might as well describe
A cancer to prevent the malady
In people yet to be. Let's have a beer.
John Campbell said: I learned from Elenor Murray
The kind of woman I should take to wife,
I married just the woman made for me."

"If you can say so on your death bed, John,
Then Elenor Murray did one man a good,
Whatever ill she did to other men.
See, I keep rapping for that waiter — I
Would like another beer, and so would you."

So now it's clear the story is not true
Which Mrs. Eaton told the coroner.

And when the coroner told the jurymen
What Mrs. Eaton told him, Winthrop Marion
Skilled in the work of running down a tale
Said: "I can look up Eaton, Campbell too,
And verify or contradict this thing.
We have departed far afield in this,
It has no bearing on the cause of death.
But none of us have liked to see, the girl's
Good name, integrity of spirit lie
In shadow by this story." Merival
Was glad to have these two men interviewed
By Winthrop Marion; so he found them, talked,
And brought their stories back, as told above
Which made the soul of Elenor Murray clear. . . .

Paul Roberts was a man of sixty years,
Who lived and ran a magazine at LeRoy.
The Dawn he called it; financed by a fund
Left Roberts by a millionaire, who believed
The fund would widen knowledge through the use
Of Roberts, student of the Eastern wisdom.
This Roberts loathed the war, but kept his peace
Because the law compelled it. Took this time
To fight the Christian faith, and show the age
Submerged in Christian ethics, weak and false.
He knew this Elenor Murray from a child,
And knew her rearing, schooling, knew the air
She breathed in at LeRoy. And in *The Dawn*
Printed this essay: —

"We have seen," he writes,
"Astonishing revealments, inventories
Taken of souls, all coming from the death
Of Elenor Murray, and the inquest held
To ascertain her death. Perhaps fantastic
This thing may be, but scarcely more fantastic
Than rubbing amber, watching frogs' legs twitch,
From which the light of cities came, the power
That hauls the coaches over mountain tops.
We would do well to laugh at nothing, watch
With interested eye the capering souls
Too moved to walk straight. If a wire grounds
And interpenetrates the granite blocks
With viewless fire, horses shod with steel,
Walking along the granite blocks will leap
Like mad things in the air. Well, so we leap
Before we know the cause. Let sound minds laugh.

First you agree no man has looked on God;
And I contend the souls who found God, told
Too little of their triumph. But I hold
Man shall find God and know, shall see at last
What man's soul is, and where it tends, the use
It was made for. And after that? Forever
There's progress while there's life, all devolution
Returns to progress.

As to worship, God
They had their amber days, days of frogs' legs.
And yet before I trace the Christian growth

From seed to blossom, let me prophesy:
The light upon the lotus blossom pauses,
Has paused these centuries and waits to move
Westward and mingle with the light that shines
Upon the Occident. What did Christ do
But carry the Hebraic thrift and prudence
Of matter and of spirit, half-corrupted
By wisdom of the market to these races
That crowd in Europe, in the Western World?
Now you have seen such things as chemistry,
And mongering in steel, the use of fire
Made perfect in swift wheels, and swifter wings,
Until the realm of matter seems subdued,
Thought with her foot upon the dragon's head,
And using him to serve. This western world
Massing its powers these centuries to bring
Comfort and happiness and length of days,
And pushing commerce, trade to pile up gold,
Knows not its soul as yet, nor God. But here
I prophesy: Suppose the Hindu lore,
Which has gone farther with the soul of man
Than we have gone with business, has card cased
The soul's addresses, introduced a system
In the soul's business, just suppose this lore
And great perfection in things spiritual
Should by some process wed the great perfection
Of this our western world, and we should have
Mastery of spirit and of matter, too?
Might not that progress start as one result
Of this great war?

Let's see from whence we came.
I take the Hebrew faith, the very frog legs
Of our theology — no use to say
It has no place with us. Your ministers
Preach from the Pentateuch, its decalogue
Is all our ethic nearly; and our life
Is suckled by the Hebrews; don't the Jews
Control our business, while our business rules
Our spirits far too much?

Now let us see
What food our spirits feed on. Palestine
Is just a little country, fights for life
Against a greater prowess, skill in arms.
So as the will does not give up, but hopes
For vengeance and for wiping out of wrongs
The Jews conceive a God who will dry up
His people's tears and let them laugh again!
Hence in Jehovah's mouth they put these words:
My word shall stand forever, you shall eat
The riches of the Gentiles, suck their milk.
Your ploughman shall the alien be, the stranger
Shall feed your flock, and I will make you fat
With milk and honey. I will give you power,
Dominion, leadership, glory forever.
My wrath is on all nations to avenge
Israel's sorrow and humiliation.
My sword is bathed in heaven, filled with blood
To come upon Idumea, to stretch out
Upon it stones of emptiness, confusion.

Her fortresses shall be the habitation
Of dragons and a court for owls. I smite
The proud Assyrian and make them dead.
In fury, and in anger do I tread
On Zion's enemies, their worm shall die not,
Nor shall their fire be quenched. I shall stir up
Jealousy like a man of war, put on
The garments of my vengeance, and repay
To adversaries fury. For my word
Shall stand to preach good tidings to the meek,
And liberty to captives, and to chains
The opening of prisons.

Don't you see
Our western culture in such words as these?
Your proselytes, and business man, reformer
Nourished upon them, using them in life?
But then you say Christ came with final truth,
And put away Jehovah. Let us see.
What shall become of those who turn from Christ,
Not that their souls failed, only that they turned,
Did not believe, accept, found in him little
To live by, grow by? This is what Christ said:
Ye vipers in the last day ye shall see
The sun turned dark, the moon made blood. Behold!
I come in clouds of glory and of power
To judge the quick and judge the dead. Mine own
Shall enter into blessedness. But to those
Evil who scorned me, I shall say, depart
Accursed into everlasting fire.

And quick the gates of heaven shall be shut,
And I shall reign in heaven with mine own
And let my fire of wrath consume the world.

But then you say, what of his love and doctrine?
Not the old decalogue by him renewed,
But new wine to the Jews, if not in the world
Unknown before. Look close and you shall see
A book of double entries, balanced columns,
Business in matters spiritual, prudential
Rules for life's conduct. Yes, be merciful
But to obtain your mercy; yes, forgive
That you may be forgiven; honor your parents
That your days may be long. Blest are the meek
For they shall inherit the earth. Rejoice, for great
Is your reward in heaven if they say
All manner of evil of you, persecute you.
Do you not see the rule of compensation
Shot through it all? And if you love your neighbor,
And all men do so, then you have the state
Composed to such a level of peace, no man
Need fear the breaker in, unless you keep
This mood of love for preaching, for a rule
While business in the Occident goes on
Under Jehovah's Hebrew manual.
What is it all? The meek inherit the earth
For being meek; you turn the other cheek
And fill your enemy with shame to strike
A cheek that does not harden to return
The blow received. But too much in our life

The cheek is turned, the hand not made a fist,
But opened out to pick a pocket with,
While the other cheek is turned. Now, at the last
Has not this war put by resist not evil?
Which was the way of Jesus to the end,
Even to buffetings and the crown of thorns;
Even the cross and death? — we put it by:
We would not let protagonists thereof
So much as hint the doctrine, which is to say,
Though it be written over Jesus' life,
And be his spirit's essence, we see through
The fallacy of that preachment, cannot live
In this world by it.

Well, let me be plain.
Races like men find truth in living life,
Find thereby what is food and what is poison.
These are the phylogenetics spiritual.
But meanwhile there's the light upon the lotus
Which waits to mingle with the light that shines
Upon the Occident, take Jesus' light
Where it is bright enough to mix with it
And show no duller splendor?

I look back
Upon the Jew and Jesus, on the Thora
The gospel, dogmatism, poetry,
The Messianic hope and will and grace,
Jesus the Son of God, and one with God.
The outer theocracy, the Kingdom of God within you,

St. Paul with metaphysics, St. Augustine
Babbling of sin in Cicero's rhetoric,
The popes with their intrigues and millions slain
O ghastly waste, if not O ghastly failure,
Beside which all the tragedies of time
To set up doctrines, rulerships, and say:
Are not a finger scratched. O monstrous hate
Born of enfolding love! O martyrdom
Of our poor world for ages, incurable madness
Bred in the blood, and mixed in the forms of thought,
Still maddening, maiming, crucifying, killing
The fast appearing sons of men. Go ask
What man you will who has lived up to forty
And see if you find not the Christian creed
Has not in some way gyved his life and bolted
Body or spirit to a wall, to make
The man live not by nature, but a doctrine
Evolved from thought that disregards man's life.
But oh this hunger of the mind for answers
And hunger of the heart for life, the heart
Thrown to the dogs of thought. What shall we do?
I see a way, have hope.

The blessed Lord
Says, ye deluded by unwisdom say:
This day is won, this purpose gained, this wealth
Made mine, to-morrow safe — behold
My enemy is slain, I am well-born —
O ye deluded ones, slaves of desire,
Self-satisfied and stubborn, filled with pride,

Power, lust and wrath — haters of me, the gate
Of hell is triple, bitter is the womb
In which ye sink deluded, birth on birth,
These not renouncing. But O soul attend,
Yield not to impotence, shake off your fears,
Be steadfast, balanced, free from hate and anger,
Balanced in pleasure and pain, and active,
Yet disregarding action's fruits — be friendly,
Compassionate, forgiving, self-controlled,
Resolute, not shrinking from the world,
But mixing in its toils as fate may say;
Pure, expert, passionless, desire in leash,
Renouncing good and evil, to friend and foe,
In fame and ignominy destitute
Of that attachment which disturbs the vision
And labor of the soul. By these to fix
Eyes undistracted on me, the supreme
And Sole Reality. And O remember
Thou soul, thou shalt not sin who workest through
Thy Karma as its nature may command.
Strive with thy sin and it shall make the muscles,
And strength to take thee to another height.
But cleave to the practice of thy soul forever,
Also to wisdom better still than practice,
To meditation, better still than wisdom,
To renunciation, better than meditation,
Beholding Me in all things, in all things
Me who would have you peace of soul attain,
And soul's perfection.

Well, I say here lies
Profounder truth and purer than the words
That Jesus spoke. Let's take forgiveness:
Forgive your enemies, he said, and bless
Them even that hate you. What did Jesus do?
Did he forgive the thief upon the cross,
Who railed at him? He did forgive the hands
Who crucified him, but he had a reason:
They knew not what they did; well, as for that
Who knows the thing he does? Did he forgive
Judas Iscariot? Did he forgive
Poor Peter by specific words? You see
In instances like these the idealist,
Passionate and inexorable who sets up
His soul against the world, but do you see
The esoteric wisdom which takes note
Of the soul's health, just for the sake of health,
And leaves the outward recompense alone?

Yes, what has Jesus done but make a realm
Of outward law and force to strain and bind
The sons of men to this thing and to that,
Bring the fanatic and the dogmatist
In every neighborhood in America.
And radical with axes after trees,
And clergymen with curses on the fig trees?
And even bring this Kaiser and his dream
Of God's will in him to destroy his foes,
And launch the war therefor, to make his realm
And Christian culture paramount in time.

When all the while 'tis clear life does not yield
Proof positive of exoteric things.
Why the great truth of life is this, I think:
The soul has freedom to create its world
Of beauty, truth, to make the world as truth
Or beauty, build philosophies, religions,
And live by them, through them. It does not matter
Whether they're true, the significant thing is this:
The soul has freedom to create, to take
The void of unintelligible air, or thought
The world at large, and of it make the food,
Impulse and meaning for its life. I say
Life is for nothing else, truth is not ours;
That only ours which we create, by which
We live and grow, and so we come again
By this path of my own to India.

What shall we do, you ask, if business dies,
If the western world, the world for socialism
Lops off its leaves and branches, and the sap
Is thrown back in the trunk unused, or if
This light upon the lotus quiets us
And makes us mind entirely? Well, I say,
Men have not lived, enjoyed enough before.
Our strength has gone to get the means for strength.
We roll the rock of business up, and see
The rock roll down, and roll it up again.
And if the new day does not give us work
In finding what our minds are, how to use them,

And how to live more beautifully, I miss
A guess I often make.

But now to close:
Only the blind have failed to see how truly
This Elenor Murray worked her Karma out.
And how she put forth strength to cure her weakness,
And went her vital way, and toiled and died.
Peace to all worlds, and peace to Elenor Murray.

The coroner had heard that Elenor Murray
Once crossed the Arctic Circle. What of that?
She traveled, it was proved. What happened there?
What hunter after secrets could find out?
But on a day the name of Elenor Murray
Is handled by two men who sit and talk
In Fairbanks, and the talk is in these words:

AT FAIRBANKS

Bill, look here! Here's the *Times*. You see this picture,
Read if you like a little later. You never
Heard how I came to Fairbanks, chanced to stay.
It's eight years now. You see in nineteen eleven
I lived in Hammond, Indiana, thought
I'd like a trip, see mountains, see Alaska,
Perhaps find fortune or a woman — well
You know from your experience how it is.

AT FAIRBANKS

It was July and from the train I saw
The Canadian Rockies, stopped at Banff a day,
At Lake Louise, and so forth. At Vancouver
Found travelers feasting, Englishmen in drink,
Flirtations budding, coming into flower;
And eager spirits waiting for the boat.
Up to this time I hadn't made a friend,
Stalked silently about along the streets,
Drank Scotch like all the rest, as much besides.

Well, then we took the steamship *Princess Alice*
And started up the Inland Channel — great!
Got on our cheeks the breezes from the crystal
Cradles of the north, began at once
To find the mystery, silence, see clear stars,
The whites and blacks and greens along the shores.
And still I had no friend, was quite alone.
Just as I came on deck I saw a face,
Looked, stared perhaps. Her eyes went over me,
Would not look at me. At the dinner table
She sat far down from me, I could not see her,
But made a point to rise when she arose,
Did all I could to catch her eye — no use.
So things went and I gave up — still I wondered
Why she had no companion. Was she married?
Was husband waiting her, at Skagway? — well
I fancied something of the sort, at last,
And as I said, gave up.

But on a morning
I rose to see the sun rise, all the sky
First as a giant pansy, petals flung
In violet toward the zenith streaked with fire;
The silver of the snows change under light,
Mottled with shadows of the mountain tops
Like leaves that shadow, flutter on a lawn.
At last the topaz splendors shoot to heaven,
The sun just peeks and gilds the porcelain
Of snow with purest gold. And in the valleys
Darkness remains, Orician ebony
Is not more black. You've seen this too, I know,
And recognize my picture. There I stood,
Believed I was alone, then heard a voice,
" Is it not beautiful? " and looked around,
And saw my girl, who had avoided me,
Would not make friends before. This is her picture,
Name, Elenor Murray. So the matter started.
I had my seat at table changed and sat
Next to my girl to talk with her. We walked
The deck together. Then she said to me
Her home was in Chicago, so it is
Travelers abroad discover they are neighbors
When they are home. She had been teaching school,
And saved her money for this trip, had planned
To go as far as Fairbanks. As for me,
I thought I'd stop with Skagway — Oh this life!
Your hat blows off, you chase it, bump a woman,
Then beg her pardon, laugh and get acquainted,
And marry later.

AT FAIRBANKS

As we steamed along
She was the happiest spirit on the deck.
The Wrangell Narrows almost drove her wild,
There where the mountains are like circus tents,
Big show, menagerie and all the rest,
But white as cotton with perennial snow.
We swum past aisles of pine trees where a stream
Rushed down in terraces of hoary foam.
The nights were glorious. We drank and ate
And danced when there was dancing.

Well, at first,
She seemed a little school ma'am, quaint, demure,
Meticulous and puritanical.
And then she seemed a school ma'am out to have
A time, so far away, where none would know,
And like a woman who had heard of life
And had a teasing interest in its wonder,
Too long caged up. At last my vision blurred:
I did not know her, lost my first impressions
Amid succeeding phases which she showed.

But when we came to Skagway, then I saw
Another Elenor Murray. How she danced
And tripped from place to place — such energy!
She almost wore me out with seeing sights.
But now behold! The White Pass she must see
Upon the principle of missing nothing —
But oh the grave of "Soapy" Smith, the outlaw,
The gambler and the heeler, that for her!

We went four miles and found the cemetery,
The grave of " Soapy " Smith.— Came back to town
Where she would see the buildings where they played
Stud poker, Keno, in the riotous days.
Time came for her to go. She looked at me
And said " Come on to Fairbanks." As for that,
I'd had enough, was ready to return,
But sensed an honorarium, so I said,
" You might induce me," with a pregnant tone.
That moment we were walking 'cross the street,
She stopped a moment, shook from head to heels,
And said, " No man has talked to me that way."
I dropped the matter. She renewed it — said,
" Why do you hurry back? What calls you back?
Come on to Fairbanks, see the gardens there,
That tag the blizzards with their rosy hands
And romp amid the snows." She smiled at me.
Well, then I thought — why not? And smiled her back,
And on we went to Fairbanks, where my hat
Blows off, as I shall tell you.

For a day
We did the town together, and that night
I thought to win her. First we dined together,
Had many drinks, my little school ma'am drank
Of everything I ordered, had a place
For more than I could drink. And truth to tell
At bed time I was woozy, ten o'clock.
We had not registered. And so I said,
" I'm Mr. Kelly and you're Mrs. Kelly."

She shook her head. And so to make an end
I could not win her, signed my name in full;
She did the same, we said good night and parted.

Next morning when I woke, felt none too good,
Got up at last and met her down at breakfast;
Tried eggs and toast, could only drink some coffee;
Got worse; in short, she saw it, put her hand
Upon my head and said, "Your head is hot,
You have a fever." Well, I lolled around
And tried to fight it off till noon — no good.
By this time I was sick, lay down to rest.
By night I could not lift my head — in short,
I lay there for a month, and all the time
She cared for me just like a mother would.
They moved me to a suite, she took the room
That opened into mine, by night and day
She nursed me, cheered me, read to me. At last
When I sat up, was soon to be about,
She said to me, "I'm going on to Nome,
St. Michael first. They tell me that you cross
The Arctic Circle going to St. Michael,
And I must cross the Arctic Circle — think
To come this far and miss it. I must see
The Indian villages." And there again
I saw, but clearer than before, the spirit
Adventuresome and restless, what you call
The heart American. I said to her,
"I'm not too well, I'm lonely,— yes, and more —
I'm fond of you, you have been good to me,

Stay with me here.—She darted in and out
The room where I was lying, doing things,
And broke my pleadings just like icicles
You shoot against a wall.

But here she was,
A month in Fairbanks, living at expense,
Said " I am short of money — lend me some,
I'll go to Nome, return to you and then
We'll ship together for the States."

You see
I really owed her money for her care,
Her loss in staying — then I loved the girl,
Had played all cards but one — I played it now:
" Come back and marry me." Her eyes looked down.
" I will be fair with you," she said, " and think.
Away from you I can make up my mind
If I have love enough to marry you."
I gave her money and she went away,
And for some weeks I had a splendid hell
Of loneliness and longing, you might know,
A stranger in Alaska, here in Fairbanks,
In love besides, and mulling in my mind
Our days and nights upon the steamer *Alice,*
Our ramblings in the Northland.

Weeks went by,
No letter and no girl. I found my health
Was vigorous again. One morning walking

AT FAIRBANKS

I kicked a twenty dollar gold piece up
Right on the side-walk. Picked it up and said:
"An omen of good luck, a letter soon!
Perhaps this town has something for me!" Well,
I thought I'd get a job to pass the time
While waiting for my girl. I got the job
And here I am to-day; I've flourished here,
Worked to the top in Fairbanks in eight years,
And thus my hat blew off.

What of the girl?
Six weeks or more a letter came from her,
She crossed the Arctic Circle, went to Nome,
Sailed back to 'Frisco where she wrote to me.
Sent all the money back I loaned to her,
And thanked me for the honor I had done her
In asking her in marriage, but had thought
The matter over, could not marry me,
Thought in the circumstances it was useless
To come to Fairbanks, see me, tell me so.

Now, Bill, I'm egotist enough to think
This girl could do no better. Now it seems
She's dead and never married — why not me?
Why did she ditch me? So I thought about it,
Was piqued of course, concluded in the end
There was another man. A woman's no
Means she has someone else, expects to have,
More suited to her fancy. Then one morning
As I awoke with thoughts of her as usual

Right in my mind there plumped an incident
On shipboard when she asked me if I knew
A certain man in Chicago. At the time
The question passed amid our running talk,
And made no memory. But you watch and see
A woman when she asks you if you know
A certain man, the chances are the man
Is something in her life. So now I lay
And thought there is a man, and that's the man;
His name is stored away, I'll dig it up
Out of the cells subliminal — so I thought
But could not bring it back.

I found at last
The telephone directory of Chicago,
And searched and searched the names from A to Z.
Some mornings would pronounce a name and think
That is the name, then throw the name away —
It did not fit the echo in my brain.

But now at last — look here! Eight years are gone,
I'm healed of Elenor Murray, married too;
And read about her death here in the *Times*,
And turn the pages over — column five —
Chicago startled by a suicide —
Gregory Wenner kills himself — behold
The name, at last, she spoke!

So much for waters in Alaska. Now
Turn eyes upon the waters nearer home.

ANTON SOSNOWSKI

Anton Sosnowski has a fateful day
And Winthrop Marion runs the story down,
And learns Sosnowski read the *Times* the day,
He broke from brooding to a dreadful deed;
Sosnowski saw the face of Elenor Murray
And Rufus Fox upon the self-same page,
And afterwards was known to show a clipping
Concerning Elenor Murray and the banner
Of Joan of Arc, the words she wrote and folded
Within the banner: to be brave, nor flinch.

ANTON SOSNOWSKI

Anton Sosnowski, from the Shakspeare School
Where he assists the janitor, sweeps and dusts,
The day now done, sits by a smeared up table
Munching coarse bread and drinking beer; before him
The evening paper spread, held down or turned
By claw-like hands, covered with shiny scars.
He broods upon the war news, and his fate
Which keeps him from the war, looks up and sees
His scarred face in the mirror over the wainscot;
His lashless eyes and browless brows and head
With patches of thin hair. And then he mutters
Hot curses to himself and turns the paper
And curses Germany, and asks revenge
For Poland's wrongs.

And what is this he sees?
The picture of his ruin and his hate,
Wert Rufus Fox! This leader of the bar
Is made the counselor of the city, now
The city takes gas, cars and telephones
And runs them for the people. So this man
Grown rich through machinations against the people,
Who fought the people all his life before,
Abettor, aider, thinker for the slickers
Regraters and forestallers and engrossers,
Is now the friend, adviser of the city,
Which he so balked and thwarted, growing rich,
Feared, noted, bowed to for the very treason
For which he is so hated, yet deferred to.

And Anton looks upon the picture, reads
About the great man's ancestry here printed,
And all the great achievements of his life;
Once president of the bar association,
And member of this club and of that club.
Contributor to charities and art,
A founder of a library, a vestryman.
And Anton looks upon the picture, trembles
Before the picture's eyes. They are the eyes
Of Innocent the Tenth, with cruelty
And cunning added — eyes that see all things
And boulder jaws that crush all things — the jaws
That place themselves at front of drifts, are placed
By that world irony which mocks the good,

And gives the glory and the victory
To strength and greed.

Anton Sosnowski looks
Long at the picture, then at his own hands,
And laughs maniacally as he takes the mug
With both hands like a bird with frozen claws,
These broken, burned off hands which handle bread
As they were wooden rakes. And in a mirror
Beside the table in the wall, smeared over
With steam from red-hots, kraut and cookery,
Of smoking fats, fixed by the dust in blurs,
And streaks, he sees his own face, horrible
For scars and splotches as of leprosy;
The eyes that have no lashes and no brows;
The bullet head that has no hair, the ears
Burnt off at top.

So comes it to this Pole
Who sees beside the picture of the lawyer
The clear cut face of Elenor Murray — yes,
She gave her spirit to the war, is dead,
Her life is being sifted now. But Fox
Lives for more honors, and by honors covers
His days of evil.

Thus Sosnowski broods,
And lives again that moment of hell when fire
Burst like a geyser from a vat where gas
Had gathered in his ignorance; being sent

To light a drying stove within the vat,
A work not his, who was the engineer.
The gas exploded as he struck the match,
And like an insect fixed upon a pin
And held before a flame, hands, face and body
Were burned and broken as his body shot
Up and against the brewery wall. What next?
The wearisome and tangled ways of courts
With Rufus Fox for foe, four trials in all
Where juries disagreed who heard the law
Erroneously given by the court.
At last a verdict favorable, and a court
Sitting above the forum where he won
To say, as there's no evidence to show
Just how the gas got in the vat, Sosnowski
Must go for life with broken hands unhelped.
And that the fact alone of gas therein
Though naught to show his fault had brought it there,
The mere explosion did not speak a fault
Against the brewery.

Out from court he went
To use a broom with crumpled hands, and look
For life in mirrors at his ghastly face.
And brood until suspicion grew to truth
That Rufus Fox had compassed juries, courts;
And read of Rufus Fox, who day by day
Was featured in the press for noble deeds,
For Art or Charity, for notable dinners,
Guests, travels and what not.

ANTON SOSNOWSKI

So now the Pole
Reading of Elenor Murray, cursed himself
That he could brood and wait — for what? — and grow
More weak of will for brooding, while this woman
Had gone to war and served and ended it,
Yet he lived on, and could not go to war;
Saw only days of sweeping with these hands,
And every day his face within the mirror,
And every afternoon this glass of beer,
And coarse bread, and these thoughts.
And every day some story to arouse
His sense of justice; how the generous
Give and pass on, and how the selfish live
And gather honors. But Sosnowski thought
If I could do a flaming thing to show
What courts are ours, what matter if I die?
What if they took their quick-lime and erased
My flesh and bones, expunged my very name,
And made its syllables forbidden? — still
If I brought in a new day for the courts,
Have I not served? he thought. Sosnowski rose
And to the bar, drank whiskey, then went out.

That afternoon Elihu Rufus Fox
Came home to dress for a dinner to be given
For English notables in town — to rest
After a bath, and found himself alone,
His wife at Red Cross work. And there alone,
Collarless, lounging, in a comfort chair,
Poring on Wordsworth's poems — all at once

Before he hears the door turned, rather feels
A foot-fall and a presence, hears too soon
A pistol shot, looks up and sees Sosnowski,
Who fires again, but misses; grabs the man,
Disarms him, flings him down, and finding blood
Upon his shirt sleeve, sees his hand is hit,
No other damage — then the pistol takes,
And covering Sosnowski, looks at him.
And after several seconds gets the face
Which gradually comes forth from memories
Of many cases, knows the man at last.
And studying Sosnowski, Rufus Fox
Divines what drove the fellow to this deed.
And in these moments Rufus Fox beholds
His life and work, and how he made the law
A thing to use, how he had builded friendships
In clubs and churches, courted politicians,
And played with secret powers, and compromised
Causes and truths for power and capital
To draw on as a lawyer, so to win
Favorable judgments when his skill was hired
By those who wished to win, who had to win
To keep the social order undisturbed
And wealth where it was wrenched to.

And Rufus Fox
Knew that this trembling wreck before him knew
About this course of life at making law
And using law, and using those who sit

To administer the law. And then he said:
"Why did you do this?"

And Sosnowski spoke:
"I meant to kill you — where's your right to live
When millions have been killed to make the world
A safer place for liberty? Where's your right
To live and have more honors, be the man
To guide the city, now that telephones,
Gas, railways have been taken by the city?
I meant to kill you just to help the poor
Who go to court. For had I killed you here
My story would be known, no matter if
They buried me in lime, and made my name
A word no man could speak. Now I have failed.
And since you have the pistol, point it at me
And kill me now — for if you tell the world
You killed me in defense of self, the world
Will never doubt you, for the world believes you
And will not doubt your word, whatever it is."

And Rufus Fox replied: "Your mind is turned
For thinking of your case, when you should know
This country is a place of laws, and law
Must have its way, no matter who is hurt.
Now I must turn you over to the courts,
And let you feel the hard hand of the law."
Just then the wife of Rufus Fox came in,
And saw her husband with his granite jaws,
And lowering countenance, blood on his shirt,

The pistol in his hand, the scarred Sosnowski,
Facing the lawyer.

Seeing that her husband
Had no wound but a hand clipped of the skin,
And learning what the story was, she saw
It was no time to let Sosnowski's wrong
Come out to cloud the glory of her husband,
Now that in a new day he had come to stand
With progress, fairer terms of life — to let
The corpse of a dead day be brought beside
The fresh and breathing life of brighter truth.
Quickly she called the butler, gave him charge
Over Sosnowski, who was taken out,
Held in the kitchen, while the two conferred,
The husband and the wife.

To him she said,
They two alone now: "I can see your plan
To turn this fellow over to the law.
It will not do, my dear, it will not do.
For though I have been sharer in your life,
Partaker of its spoils and fruits, I see
This man is just a ghost of a dead day
Of your past life, perhaps, in which I shared.
But that dead life I would not resurrect
In memory even, it has passed us by,
You shall not live it more, no more shall I.
The war has changed the world — the harvest coming
Will have its tares no doubt, but the old tares

Have been cut out and burned, wholly, I trust.
And just to think you used that sharpened talent
For getting money, place, in the old regime,
To place you where to-day? Why, where you must
Use all your talents for the common good.
A barter takes two parties, and the traffic
Whereby the giants of the era gone —
(You are a giant rising on the wreck
Of programs and of plots) — made riches for
Themselves and those they served, is gone as well.
Since gradually no one is left to serve
Or have an interest but the state or city,
The community which is all and should be all.
So here you are at last despite yourself,
Changed not in mind perhaps, but changed in place,
Work, interest, taking pride too in the work;
And speaking with your outer mind, at least
Praise for the day and work.

I am at fault,
And take no virtue to myself — I lived
Your life with you and coveted the things
Your labors brought me. All is changed for me.
I would be poorer than this wretched Pole
Rather than go back to the day that's dead,
Or reassume the moods I lived them through.
What can we do now to undo the past,
Those days of self-indulgence, ostentation,
False prestige, witless pride, that waste of time,
Money and spirit, haunted by ennui

Insatiable emotion, thirst for change.
At least we can do this: We can set up
The race's progress and our country's glory
As standards for our work each day, go on
Perhaps in ignorance, misguided faith;
And let the end approve our poor attempts.
Now to begin, I ask two things of you:
If you or anyone who did your will
Wronged this poor Pole, make good the wrong at once.
And for the sake of bigness let him go.
For your own name's sake, let the fellow go.
Do you so promise me?"

And Rufus Fox,
Who looked a thunder cloud of wrath and power
Before the mirror tying his white tie,
All this time silent — only spoke these words:
"Go tell the butler to keep guard on him
And hold him till we come from dinner."

The wife
Looked at the red black face of Rufus Fox
There in the mirror, which like Lao's mirror
Reflected what his mind was, then went out
Gently to her bidding, found Sosnowski
Laughing and talking with the second maid,
Watched over by the butler, quite himself,
His pent up anger half discharged, his grudge
In part relieved.

CONSIDER FREELAND

There was a garrulous ancient at LeRoy
Who traced all evils to monopoly
In land, all social cures to single tax.
He tried to button-hole the coroner
And tell him what he thought of Elenor Murray.
But Merival escaped. And then this man,
Consider Freeland named, got in a group
And talked his mind out of the case, the land
And what makes poverty and waste in lives:

CONSIDER FREELAND

Look at that tract of land there — five good acres
Held out of use these thirty years and more.
They keep a cow there. See! the cow's there now.
She can't eat up the grass, there is so much.
And in these thirty years these houses here,
Here, all around here have been built. This lot
Is worth five times the worth it had before
These houses were built round it.

Well, by God,

I am in part responsible for this.
I started out to be a first rate lawyer.
Was I first rate lawyer? Well, I won
These acres for the Burtons in the day
When I could tell you what is gavel kind,
Advowsons, corodies, frank tenements,

Scutage, escheats, feoffments, heriots,
Remainders and reversions, and mortmain,
Tale special and tale general, tale female,
Fees absolute, conditional, copyholds;
And used to stand and argue with the courts
The difference 'twixt a purchase, limitation,
The rule in Shelley's case.

And so it was
In my good days I won these acres here
For old man Kingston's daughter, who in turn
Bound it with limitation for the life
Of selfish sons, who keep a caretaker,
Who keeps a cow upon it. There's the cow!
The land has had no use for thirty years.
The children are kept off it. Elenor Murray,
This girl whose death makes such a stir, one time
Was playing there — but that's another story.
I only say for the present, these five acres
Made Elenor Murray's life a thing of waste
As much as anything, and a damn sight more.
For think a minute!

Kingston had a daughter
Married to Colonel Burton in Kentucky.
And Kingston's son was in the Civil War.
But just before the war, the Burtons deeded
These acres here, which she inherited
From old man Kingston, to this Captain Kingston,
The son aforesaid of Old Kingston. Well,

The deed upon its face was absolute,
But really was a deed in trust.

The Captain
Held title for a year or two, and then
An hour before he fought at Shiloh, made
A will, and willed acres to his wife,
Fee simple and forever. Now you'd think
That contemplating death, he'd make a deed
Giving these acres back to Mrs. Burton,
The sister who had trusted him. I don't know
What comes in people's heads, but I believe
The want of money is the root of evil,
As well as love of money; for this Captain
Perhaps would make provision for his wife
And infant son, thought that the chiefest thing
No matter how he did it, being poor,
Willed this land as he did. But anyway
He willed it so, went into Shiloh's battle,
And fell dead on the field.

What happened then?
They took this will to probate. As I said
I was a lawyer then, you may believe it,
Was hired by the Burtons to reclaim
These acres from the Widow Kingston's clutch,
Under this wicked will. And so I argued
The will had not been witnessed according to law.
Got beat upon that point in the lower court,
But won upon it in the upper courts.

Then next I filed a bill to set aside
This deed the Burtons made to Captain Kingston —
Oh, I was full of schemes, expedients,
In those days, I can tell you. Widow Kingston
Came back and filed a cross bill, asked the court
To confirm the title in her son and her
As heirs of Captain Kingston, let the will
Go out of thought and reckoning. Here's the issue;
You understand the case, no doubt. We fought
Through all the courts. I lost in the lower court,
As I lost on the will. There was the deed:
For love and affection and one dollar we
Convey and warrant lots from one to ten
In the city of LeRoy, to Captain Kingston
To be his own forever.

How to go
Behind such words and show the actual trust
Inhering in the deed, that was the job.
But here I was resourceful as before,
Found witnesses to testify they heard
This Captain Kingston say he held the acres
In trust for Mrs. Burton — but I lost
Before the chancellor, had to appeal,
But won on the appeal, and thus restored
These acres to the Burtons. And for this
What did I get? Three hundred lousy dollars.
That's why I smoke a pipe; that's also why
I quit the business when I saw the business
Was making ready to quit me. By God,

CONSIDER FREELAND

My life is waste so far as it was used
By this law business, and no coroner
Need hold an inquest on me to find out
What waste was in my life — God damn the law!

Well, then I go my way, and take my fee,
And pay my bills. The Burtons have the land,
And turn a cow upon it. See how nice
A playground it would be. I've seen ten sets
Of children try to play there — hey! you hear,
The caretaker come out, get off of there!
And then the children scamper, climb the fence.

Well, after while the Burtons die. The will
Leaves these five acres to their sons for life,
Remainder to the children of the sons.
The sons are living yet at middle life,
These acres have been tied up twenty years,
They may be tied up thirty years beside:
The sons can't sell it, and their children can't,
Only the cow can use it, as it stands.
It grows more valuable as the people come here,
And bring in being Elenor Murrays, children,
And make the land around it populous.
That's what makes poverty, this holding land,
It makes the taxes harder on the poor,
It makes work scarcer, and it takes your girls
And boys and throws them into life half made,
Half ready for the battle. Is a country
Free where the laws permit such things? Your priests,

Your addle-headed preachers mouthing Christ
And morals, prohibition, laws to force
People to be good, to save the girls,
When every half-wit knows environment
Takes natures, made unstable in these homes
Of poverty and does the trick.

That baronet
Who mocked our freedom, sailing back for England
And said: Your Liberty Statue in the harbor
Is just a joke, that baronet is right,
While such conditions thrive.

Well, look at me
Who for three hundred dollars take a part
In making a cow pasture for a cow
For fifty years or so. I hate myself.
And were the Burtons better than this Kingston?
Kingston would will away what was not his.
The Burtons took what is the gift of God,
As much as air, and fenced it out of use —
Save for the cow aforesaid — for the lives
Of sons in being.

Oh, I know you think
I have a grudge. I have.

This Elenor Murray
Was ten years old I think, this law suit ended
Twelve years or so, and I was running down,

Was tippling just a little every day;
And I came by this lot one afternoon
When school was out, a sunny afternoon.
The children had no place except the street
To play in; they were standing by the fence,
The cow was way across the lot, and Elenor
Was looking through the fence, some boys and girls
Standing around her, and I said to them:
" Why don't you climb the fence and play in there? "
And Elenor — she always was a leader,
And not afraid of anything, said: " Come on,"
And in a jiffy climbed the fence, the children,
Some quicker and some slower, followed her.
Some said " They don't allow it." Elenor
Stood on the fence, flung up her arms and crowed,
And said " What can they do? He says to do it,"
Pointing at me. And in a moment all of them
Were playing and were shouting in the lot.
And I stood there and watched them half malicious,
And half in pleasure watching them at play.
Then I heard " hey! " the care-taker ran out.
And said " Get out of there, I will arrest you."
He drove them out and as they jumped the fence
Some said, " He told us to," pointing at me.
And Elenor Murray said " Why, what a lie! "
And then the care-taker grabbed Elenor Murray
And said, " You are the wildest of them all."
I spoke up, saying, " Leave that child alone.
I won this God damn land for those you serve,
They use it for a cow and nothing else,

And let these children run about the streets,
When there are grass and dandelions there
In plenty for these children, and the cow,
And space enough to play in without bothering
That solitary cow." I took his hands
Away from Elenor Murray; he and I
Came face to face with clenched fists — but at last
He walked away; the children scampered off.

Next day, however, they arrested me
For aiding in a *trespass clausam fregit,*
And fined me twenty dollars and the costs.
Since then the cow has all her way in there.
And Elenor Murray left this rotten place,
Went to the war, came home and died, and proved
She had the sense to leave so vile a world.

George Joslin ending up his days with dreams
Of youth in Europe, travels, and with talk,
Stirred to a recollection of a face
He saw in Paris fifty years before,
Because the face resembled Elenor Murray's,
Explored his drawers and boxes, where he kept
Mementos, treasures of the olden days.
And found a pamphlet, came to Merival,
With certain recollections, and with theories
Of Elenor Murray: —

GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Here, Coroner Merival, look at this picture!
Whom does it look like? Eyes too crystalline,
A head like Byron's, tender mouth, and neck,
Slender and white, a pathos as of smiles
And tears kept back by courage. Yes, you know
It looks like Elenor Murray.

Well, you see
I read each day about the inquest — good!
Dig out the truth, begin a system here
Of making family records, let us see
If we can do for people when we know
How best to do it, what is done for stock.
So build up Illinois, the nation too.
I read about you daily. And last night
When Elenor Murray's picture in the *Times*
Looked at me, I began to think, Good Lord,
Where have I seen that face before? I thought
Through more than fifty years departed, sent
My mind through Europe and America
In all my travels, meetings, episodes.
I could not think. At last I opened up
A box of pamphlets, photographs, mementos,
Picked up since 1860, and behold
I find this pamphlet of La Belle Menken.
Here is your Elenor Murray born again,
As here might be your blackbird of this year

With spots of red upon his wings, the same
As last year's blackbird, like a pansy springing
Out of the April of this year, repeating
The color, form of one you saw last year.
Repeating and the same, but not the same;
No two alike, you know. I'll come to that.

Well, then, La Menken — as a boy in Paris
I saw La Menken, I'll return to this.
But just as Elenor Murray has her life
Shadowed and symbolized by our Starved Rock —
And everyone has something in his life
Which takes him, makes him, is the image too
Of fate prefigured — La Menken has Mazeppa,
Her notable first part as actress, emblem
Of spirit, character, and of omen too
Of years to come, the thrill of life, the end.

Who is La Menken? Symbol of America,
One phase of spirit! She was venturesome,
Resourceful, daring, hopeful, confident,
And as she wrote of self, a vagabond,
A dweller in tents, a reveler, and a flame
Aspiring but disreputable, coming up
With leaves that shamed her stalk, could not be shed,
But stuck out heavy veined and muddy hued
In time of blossom. There are souls, you know,
Who have shed shapeless immaturities,
Betrayals of the seed before the blossom
Comes to proclaim a beauty, a perfection;

Or risen with their stalk, until such leaves
Were hidden in the grass or soil — not she,
Nor even your Elenor Murray, as I read her.
But being America and American,
Brings good and bad together, blossom and leaves
With prodigal recklessness, in vital health
And unselective taste and vision mixed
Of beauty and of truth.

Who was La Menken?
She's born in Louisiana in thirty-five,
Left fatherless at seven — mother takes her
And puts her in the ballet at New Orleans.
She dances then from Texas clear to Cuba;
Then gives up dancing, studies tragedy,
And plays Bianca! Fourteen years of age
Weds Menken, who's a Jew, divorced from him;
Then falls in love with Heenan, pugilist.
They quarrel and separate — it's in this pamphlet
Just as I tell you; you can take it, Coroner.
Now something happens, nothing in her birth
Or place of birth to prophesy her life
Like Starved Rock to this Elenor — being grown,
A hand instead is darted from the curtain
That hangs between to-day, to-morrow, sticks
A symbol on her heart and whispers to her:
You're this, my woman. Well, the thing was this:
She played Mazeppa: take your dummy off,
And lash me to the horse. They were afraid,
But she prevailed, was nearly killed the first night,

And after that succeeded, was the rage
And for her years remaining found herself
Lashed to the wild horse of ungoverned will,
Which ran and wandered, till she knew herself
With stronger will than vision, passion stronger
Than spirit to judge; the richness of the world,
Love, beauty, living, greater than her power.
And all the time she had the appetite
To eat, devour it all. Grown sick at last,
She diagnosed her case, wrote to a friend:
The soul and body do not fit each other —
A human spirit in a horse's flesh.
This is your Elenor Murray, in a way.
But to return to pansies, run your hand
Over a bed of pansies; here's a pansy
With petals stunted, here's another one
All perfect but one petal, here's another
Too streaked or mottled — all are pansies though.
And here is one full petaled, strikes the eye
With perfect color, markings. Elenor Murray
Has something of the color and the form
Of this La Menken, but is less a pansy,
And Sappho, Rachel, Bernhardt are the flowers
La Menken strove to be, and could not be,
Ended with being only of their kind.
And now there's pity for this Elenor Murray,
And people wept when poor La Menken died.
Both lived and had their way. I hate this pity,
It makes you overlook there are two hours:
The hour of joy, the hour of finding out

Your joy was all mistake, or led to pain.
We who inspect these lives behold the pain,
And see the error, do not keep in mind
The hour of rapture, and the pride, indeed
With which your Elenor Murrays and La Menkens
Have lived that hour, elation, pride and scorn
For any other way — "this is the life"
I hear them say.

Well, now I go along.
La Menken fills her purse with gold — she sends
Her pugilist away, tries once again
And weds a humorist, an Orpheus Kerr —
And plays before the miners out in 'Frisco,
And Sacramento, gathers in the eagles.
She goes to Europe then — with husband? No!
James Barkley is her fellow on the voyage.
She lands in London, takes a gorgeous suite
In London's grandest hostlery, entertains
Charles Dickens, Prince Baerto and Charles Read,
The Duke of Wellington and Swinburne, Sand
And Jenny Lind; and has a liveried coachman;
And for a crest a horse's head surmounting
Four aces, if you please. And plays Mazeppa,
And piles the money up.

Then next is Paris.
And there I saw her, 1866,
When Louis Napoleon and the King of Greece,
The Prince Imperial were in a box.

She wandered to Vienna, there was ill,
Came back to Paris, died, a stranger's grave
In Pere la Chaise was given, afterwards
Exhumed in Mont Parnasse was buried, got
A little stone with these words carved upon it:
"Thou Knowest" meaning God knew, while herself
Knew nothing of herself.

But when in Paris
They sold her picture taken with her arms
Around Dumas, and photographs made up
Of postures ludicrous, obscene as well,
Of her and great Dumas, I have them home.
Can show you sometime. Well she loved Dumas,
Inscribed a book of poems to Charles Dickens,
By his permission, mark you — don't you see
Your Elenor Murray here? This Elenor Murray
A miniature imperfect of La Menken?
She loved sensation, all her senses thrilled her;
A delicate soul too weighted by the flesh;
A coquette, quick of wit, intuitive,
Kind, generous, unaffected, mystical,
Teased by the divine in life, and melancholy,
Of deep emotion sometimes. One has said
She had a nature spiritual, religious
Which warred upon the flesh and fell in battle;
Just as your Elenor Murray joined the church,
And did not keep the faith, if truth be told.

Now look, here is a letter in this pamphlet
La Menken writes a poet — for she hunts
For seërs and for poets, lofty souls.
And who does that? A woman wholly bad?
Why no, a woman to be given life
Fit for her spirit in another realm
By God who will take notice, I believe.
Now listen if you will! "I know your soul.
It has met mine somewhere in starry space.
And you must often meet me, vagabond
Of fancy without aim, a dweller in tents
Disreputable before the just. Just think
I am a linguist, write some poems too,
Can paint a little, model clay as well.
And yet for all these gropings of my soul
I am a vagabond, of little use.
My body and my soul are in a scramble
And do not fit each other — let them carve
Those words upon my stone, but also these
Thou Knowest, for God knows me, knows I love
Whatever is good and beautiful in life;
And that my soul has sought them without rest.
Farewell, my friend, my spirit is with you,
Vienna is too horrible, but know Paris
Then die content."

Now, Coroner Merival,
You're not the only man who wants to see,
Will work to make America a republic
Of splendors, freedoms, happiness, success.

Though I am seventy-six, cannot do much,
Save talk, as I am talking now, bring forth
Proofs, revelations from the years I've lived.
I care not how you view the lives of people,
As pansy beds or what not, lift your faith
So high above the pansy bed it sees
The streaked and stunted pansies filling in
The pattern that the perfect pansies outline,
Therefore are smiling, even indifferent
To this poor conscious pansy, dying at last
Because it could not be the flower it wished.
My heart to Elenor Murray and La Menken
Goes out in sorrow, even while I know
They shook their leaves in April, laughed and thrilled,
And either did not know, or did not care
The growing time was precious, and if wasted
Could never be regained. Look at La Menken
At seven years put in the ballet corps;
And look at Elenor Murray getting smut
Out of experience that made her wise.
What shall we do about it? — let it go?
And say there is no help, or say a republic,
Set up a hundred years ago, raised to the helm
Of rulership as president a list
Of men more able than the emperors,
Kings, rulers of the world, and statesmen too
The equal of the greatest, money makers,
And domineers of finance and economies
Phenomenal in time — say, I repeat
A country like this one must let its children

Waste as they wasted in the darker years
Of Europe. Shall we let these trivial minds
Who see salvation, progress in restraint,
Pre-empt the field of moulding human life?
Or shall we take a hand, and put our minds
Upon the task, as recently we built
An army for the war, equipped and fed it,
An army better than all other armies,
More powerful, more apt of hand and brain,
Of thin tall youths, who did stop but said
Like poor La Menken, strap me to the horse
I'll do it if I die — so giving to peace
The skill and genius which we use in war,
Though it cost twenty billion, and why not?
Why every dollar, every drop of blood
For war like this tò guard democracy,
And not so much or more to build the land,
Improve our blood, make individual
America and her race? And first to rout
Poverty and disease, give youth its chance,
And therapeutic guidance. Soldier boys
Have huts for recreation, clergymen,
And is it more, less worth to furnish hands
Intimate, hearts intimate for the use
Of your La Menkens, Elenor Murrays, youths
Who feel such vigor in their restless wings
They tumble out of crowded nests and fly
To fall in thickets, dash themselves against
Walls, trees?

I have a vision, Coroner,
Of a new Republic, brighter than the sun,
A new race, loftier faith, this land of ours
Made over as to people, boys and girls,
Conserved like forests, water power or mines;
Watched, tested, put to best use, keen economies
Practiced in spirits, waste of human life,
Hope, aspiration, talent, virtues, powers,
Avoided by a science, science of life,
Of spirit, what you will. Enough of war,
And billions for the flag — all well enough!
Some billions now to make democracy
Democracy in truth with us, and life
Not helter-skelter, hitting as it may,
And missing much, as this La Menken did.
I'm not convinced we must have stunted pansies,
That have no use but just to piece the pattern.
Let's try, and if we try and fail, why then
Our human duty ends, the God in us
Will have it just this way, no other way.
And then we may accept so poor a world,
A republic so unfinished.

Will Paget is another writer of letters
To Coroner Merival. The coroner
Spends evenings reading letters, keeps a file
Where he preserves them. And the blasphemy
Of Paget makes him laugh. He has an evening
And reads this letter to the jurymen:

WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

To Coroner Merival, greetings, but a voice
Dissentient from much that goes the rounds,
Concerning Elenor Murray. Here's my word:
Give men and women freedom, save the land
From dull theocracy — the theo, what?
A blend of Demos and Jehovah! Say,
Bring back your despots, bring your Louis Fourteenths,
And give them thrones of gold and ivory
From where with leaded sceptres they may whack
King Demos driven forth. You know the face?
The temples are like sea shells, hollows out,
Which narrow close the space for cortex cells.
There would be little brow if hair remained;
But hair is gone, because the dandruff came.
The eyes are close together like a weasel's;
The jaws are heavy, that is character;
The mouth is thin and wide to gobble chicken;
The paunch is heavy for the chickens eaten.
Throned high upon a soap box Demos rules,
And mumbles decalogues: Thou shalt not read,
Save what I tell you, never books that tell
Of men and women as they live and are.
Thou shalt not see the dramas which portray
The evil passions and satiric moods
Which mock this Christian nation and its hope.
Thou shalt not drink, not even wine or beer.
Thou shalt not play at cards, or see the races.

Thou shalt not be divorced! Thou shalt not play.
Thou shalt not bow to graven images
Of beauty cut in marble, fused in bronze.
Behold my name is Demos, King of Kings,
My name is legion, I am many, come
Out of the sea where many hogs were drowned,
And now the ruler of hogocracy,
Where in the name of freedom hungry snouts
Root up the truffles in your great republic,
And crunch with heavy jaws the legs and arms
Of people who fall over in the pen.
Hierarchies in my name are planted under
Your states political to sprout and take
The new world's soil,— religious freedom this! —
Thought must be free — unless your thought objects
To such dominion, and to literal faith
In an old book that never had a place
Except beside the Koran, Zarathustra.
So here is your theocracy and here
The land of Boredom. Do you wonder now
That people cry for war? You see that God
Frowns on all games but war. You shall not play
Or kindle spirit with a rapture save
A moral end's in view. All joy is sin,
Where joy stands for itself alone, nor asks
Consent to be, save for itself. But war
Waged to put down the wrong, it's always that;
To vindicate God's truths, all wars are such,
Is game that lets the spirit play, is backed
By God and moral reasons, therefore war,

A game disguised as business, cosmic work
For great millenniums, no less relieves
The boredom of theocracies. But if
Your men and women had the chance to play,
Be free and spend superfluous energies,
In what I call the greatest game, that's Life,
Have life more freely, deeply, and you say
How would you like a war and lose a leg,
Or come from battle sick for all your years?
You would say no, unless you saw an issue,
Stripped clean of Christian twaddle, as we'll say
The Greeks beheld the Persians. Well, behold
All honest paganism in such things discarded
For God who comes in glory, trampling presses
Filled up with grapes of wrath.

Now hear me out:
I knew we'd have a war, it wasn't only
That your hogocracy was grunting war
We'd fight Japan, take Mexico — remember
How dancing flourished madly in the land;
Then think of savages who dance the Ghost Dance,
And cattle lowing, rushing in a panic,
There's psychic secrets here. But then at last
What can you do with life? You're well and strong,
Flushed with desire, mad with appetites,
You turn this way and find a sign forbidden,
You turn that way and find the door is closed.
Hogocracy, King Demos say, go back,
Find work, develop character, restrain,

Draw up your belt a little tighter, hunger
And thirst diminish with a tighter belt.
And none to say, take off the belt and eat,
Here's water for you.

Well, you have a war.
We used to say in foot ball kick their shins,
And gouge their eyes out — when our shins were kicked
We hollered foul and ouch. There was the south
Who called us mud-sills in this freer north,
And mouthed democracy; and as for that
Their churches made of God a battle leader,
An idea come from Palestine; oh, yes,
They soon would wipe us up, they were the people.
But when we slaughtered them they hollered ouch.
And why not? For a gun and uniform,
And bands that play are rapturous enough.
But when you get a bullet through the heart,
The game is not so funny as it was.
That's why I hated Germany and hate her,
And feel we could not let this German culture
Spread over earth. That culture was but this:
Life must have an expression and a game,
And war's the game, besides the prize is great
In land and treasure, commerce, let us play.
It lets the people's passions have a vent
When fires of life burn hot and hotter under
The kettle and the lid is clamped by work,
Dull duty, daily routine, inhibitions.
Before this Elenor Murray woke to life

WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

LeRoy was stirring, but the stir was play.
It was a Gretna Green, and pleasure boats
Ran up and down the river — on the streets
You heard the cry of barkers, in the park
The band was playing, and you heard the ring
Of registers at fountains and buffets.
All this was shabby maybe, but observe
There are those souls who see the wrath of God
As blackest background to the light of soul:
And when the thunder rumbles and the storm
Comes up with lightning then they say to men
Who laugh in bar-rooms, " Have a care, blasphemers,
You may be struck by lightning "— here's the root
From which this mood ascetic comes to leaf
In all theocracies, and throws a shadow
Upon all freedom.

Look at us to-day.
They say to me, see what a town we have:
The men at work, smoke coming from the chimneys,
The banks full up of money, business good,
The workmen sober, going home at night,
No rowdy barkers and no bands a-playing,
No drinking and no gaming and no vice.
No marriages contracted to be broken.
Look how LeRoy is quiet, sane and clean!
And I reply, you like the stir of work,
But not the stir of play; your chimneys smoke,
Your banks have money. Let me look behind
The door that closes on your man at home,

The wife and children there, what shall I find?
A sick man looks to health as it were all,
But when the fever leaves him and he feels
The store of strength in muscles slumbering
And waiting to be used, then something else
Than health is needful, he must have a way
To voice the life within him, and he wonders
Why health seemed so desirable before,
And all sufficient to him.

Take this girl:
Why do you marvel that she rode at night
With any man who came along? Good God,
If I were born a woman and they put me
In a theocracy, hogocracy,
I'd do the first thing that came in my mind
To give my soul expression. Don't you think
You're something of a bully and a coward
To ask such model living from this girl
When you, my grunting hogos, run the land
And bring us scandals like the times of Grant,
And poisoned beef sold to the soldier boys,
When we were warring Spain, and all this stuff
Concerning loot and plunder, malversation,
That riots in your cities, printed daily?
I roll the panoramic story out
To Washington the great — what do I see?
It's tangle foot, the sticky smear is dry;
But I can find wings, legs and heads, remember
How little flies and big were buzzing once

Of God and duty, country, virtue, faith;
And beating wings, already gummed with sweet,
Until their little bellies touched the glue,
They sought to fill their bellies with — at last
Long silence, which is history, scroll rolled up
And spoken of in sacred whispers.

Well,
I'm glad that Elenor Murray had her fling,
If that be really true. I understand
What drove her to the war. I think she knew
Too much to marry, settle down and live
Under the rule of Demos or of Hogos.
I wish we had a dozen Elenor Murrays
In every village in this land of Demos
To down Theocracy, which is just as bad
As Prussianism, is no different
From Prussianism. And I fear but this
As fruitage of the war: that men and women
Will have burnt on their souls the words ceramic
That war's the thing, and this theocracy,
Where generous outlets for the soul are stopped
Will keep the words in mind. When boredom comes,
And grows intolerable, you'll see the land
Go forth to war to get a thrill and live —
Unless we work for freedom, for delight
And self-expression.

Dwight Henry is another writer of letters,
Stirred by the Murray inquest; writes a screed

"The House that Jack Built," read by Merival
To entertain his jury, in these words:

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Why don't they come to me to find the cause
Of Elenor Murray's death? The house is first;
That is the world, and Jack is God, you know;
The malt is linen, purple, wine and food,
The rats that get the malt are nobles, lords,
Those who had feudal dues and hunting rights,
And privileges, first nights, all the rest.
The cats are your Voltaires, Rousseaus; the dogs,
Your jailers, Louis, Fredericks and such.
And O, you blessed cow, you common people,
Whom maidens all forlorn attend and milk.
Here is your Elenor Murray who gives hands,
Brain, heart and spirit to the task of milking,
And straining milk that other lips may drink,
Revive and flourish, wedding, if she weds,
The tattered man in church, which is your priest
Shaven and shorn, and wakened with the sun
By the cock, theology that keeps the house
Well timed and ruled for honor unto Jack,
Who must have order, rising on the hour,
And ceremony for his house.

If rats
Had never lived, or left the malt alone,
This girl had lived. Let's trace the story down:
We went to France to fight, we go to France
To get the origin of Elenor's death.
It's 1750, say, the malt of France
And Europe, too, is over-run by rats;
The nobles and the clergy own the land,
Exact the taxes, drink the luscious milk
Of the crumpled horns. But cats come slinking by
Called Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau. Now look!
Cat Diderot goes after war and taxes,
The slave trade, privilege, the merchant stomach.
In England, too, there is a sly grimalkin,
Who poisons rats with most malicious thoughts,
And bears the name of Adam — Adam Smith,
By Jack named Adam just to signify
His sinful nature. But the cat Voltaire
Says Adam never fell, that man is good,
An honest merchant better than a king,
And shaven priests are worse than parasites.
He rubs his glossy coat against the legs
Of Quakers, loving natures, loathes the trade
Of war, and runs with velvet feet across
The whole of Europe, scaring rats to death.
The cat Rousseau is instinct like a cat,
And purrs that man born free is still in chains
Here in this house that Jack built. Consequence?
There is such squeaking, running of the rats,
The cats in North America wake up

And drive the English rats out; then the dogs
Grow cautious of the cats, poor simple Louis
Convokes a French assembly to preserve
The malt against the rats and give the cow
Whose milk is growing blue and thin some malt.
And all at once rats, cats and dogs, the cow,
The shaven priest, the maiden all forlorn,
The tattered man, the cock, are in a hubbub
Of squeaking, caterwauling, barking, lowing,
With cock-a-doodles, curses, prayers and shrieks
Ascending from the melee. In a word,
You have a revolution.

All at once
A mastiff dog appears and barks: " Be still."
And in a way in France's room in the house
Brings order for a time. He grabs the fabric
Of the Holy Roman Empire, tears it up,
Sends for the shaven priest from Rome and bites
His shrunken calves; trots off to Jena where
He whips the Prussian dogs, but wakes them too
To breed and multiply, grow strong to fight
All other dogs in Jack's house, bite to death
The maidens all forlorn, like Elenor Murray.

This mastiff, otherwise Napoleon called,
Is downed at last by dogs from everywhere.
They're rid of him — but still the house of Jack
Is better than it was, the rats are thick,
But cats grow more abundant, malt is served

More generously to the cow. The Prussian dogs
Discover malt's the thing, also the cow
Must have her malt, or else the milk gives out.
But all the while the Prussian dogs grow strong,
Well taught and angered by Napoleon.
And some of them would set the house in order
After the manner of America.
But many wish to fight, get larger rooms,
Then set the whole in order. At Sadowa
They whip the Austrian dogs, and once again
A mastiff comes, a Bismarck, builds a suite
From north to south, and forces Austria
To huddle in the kitchen, use the outhouse
Where Huns and Magyars, Bulgars and the rest
Keep Babel under Jack who split their tongues
To make them hate each other and suspect,
Not understanding what the other says.
This very Babel was the cause of death
Of Elenor Murray, if I chose to stop
And go no further with the story.

Next
Our mastiff Bismarck thinks of Luneville,
And would avenge it, grabs the throat of France,
And downs her; at Versailles growls and carries
An emperor of Germany to the throne.
Then pants and wags his tail, and little dreams
A dachshund in an early day to come
Will drive him from the kennel and the bone
He loves to crunch and suck.

The Archduke Francis, on the Serbian soil,
Then Austria moves on Serbia, Russia moves
To succor Serbia, France is pledged to help
The Russians, but our dachshund has a bond
With Austria and rushes to her aid.
Then England must protect the channel, yes,
France must be saved — and here you have your war.

And now for Elenor Murray. Top of brain
Where ideals float like clouds, we owed to France
A debt, but had we paid it, if the dog,
The dachshund, mad at last, had left our ships
To freedom of the seas? Say what you will,
This England is the smartest thing in time,
Can never fall, be conquered while she keeps
That mind of hers, those eyes that see all things,
Spies or no spies, knows every secret hatched
In every corner of the house of Jack.
And with one language spoken by more souls
Than any tongue, leads minds by written words;
Writes treaties, compacts which forstall the sword,
And makes it futile when it's drawn against her. . . .
You cuff your enemy at school or make
A naso-digital gesture, coming home
You fear your enemy, so walk beside
The gentle teacher; if your enemy
Throws clods at you, he hits the teacher. Well,
'Twas wise to hide munitions back of skirts,
And frocks of little children, most unwise
For Dachshund William to destroy the skirts

And frocks to sink munitions, since the wearers
Happened to be Americans. William fell
Jumping about his room and spilled the clock,
Raked off the mantel; broke his billikens,
His images of Jack by doing this.
For, seeing this, we rise; ten million youths
Take guns for war, and many Elenor Murrays
Swept out of placid places by the ripples
Cross seas to serve.

This girl was French in part,
In spirit was American. Look back
Do you not see Voltaire lay hold of her,
Hands out of tombs and spirits, from the skies
Lead her to Europe? Trace the causes back
To Adam, or the dwellers of the lakes,
It is enough to see the souls that stirred
The Revolution of the French which drove
The ancient evils from the house of Jack.
It is enough to hope that from this war
The vestiges of feudal wrongs shall lie
In Jack's great dust-pan, swept therein and thrown
In garbage cans by maidens all forlorn,
The Fates we'll call them now, lame goddesses,
Hags halt, far sighted, seeing distant things,
Near things but poorly — this is much to hope!
But if we get a freedom that is free
For Elenor Murrays, maidens all forlorn,
And tattered men, and so prevent the wars,
Already budding in this pact of peace,

This war is good, and Elenor Murray's life
Not waste, but gain.

Now for a final mood,
As it were second sight. I open the door,
Walk from the house of Jack, look at the roof,
The chimneys, over them see depths of blue.
Jack's house becomes a little ark that sails,
Tosses and bobbles in an infinite sea.
And all events of evil, war and strife,
The pain and folly, test of this and that,
The groping from one thing to something else,
Old systems turned to new, old eras dead,
New eras rising, these are ripples all
Moving from some place in the eternal sea
Where Jack is throwing stones,— these ripples lap
Against the house of Jack, or toss it so
The occupants go reeling here and there,
Laugh, scowl, grow sick, tread on each other's toes.
While all the time the sea is most concerned
With tides and currents, little with the house,
Ignore this Elenor Murray or Voltaire,
Who living and who dying reproduce
Ripples upon the pools of time and place,
That knew them; and so on where neither eye
Nor mind can trace the ripples vanishing
In ether, realms of spirit, what you choose!

Now on a day when Merival was talking
More evidence at the inquest, he is brought

The card of Mary Black, associate
Of Elenor Murray in the hospital
Of France, and asks the coroner to hear
What Elenor Murray suffered in the war.
And Merival consents and has her sworn;
She testifies as follows to the jury:

Poor girl, she had an end! She seems to me
A torch stuck in a bank of clay, snuffed out,
Her warmth and splendor wasted. Never girl
Had such an ordeal and a fate before.
She was the lucky one at first, and then
Evils and enemies flocked down upon her,
And beat her to the earth.

But when we sailed
You never saw so radiant a soul,
While most of us were troubled, for you know
Some were in gloom, had quarreled with their beaux,
Who did not say farewell. And there were some
Who talked for weeks ahead of seeing beaux
And having dinners with them who missed out.

We were a tearful, a deserted lot.
And some were apprehensive — well you know!
But Elenor, she had a beau devoted
Who sent her off with messages and love,
And comforts for her service in the war.
And so her face was lighted, she was gay,

And said to us: " How wonderful it is
To serve, to nurse,. to play our little part
For country, for democracy." And to me
She said: " My heart is brimming over with love.
Now I can work and nurse, now use my hands
To soothe and heal, which burn to finger tips,
With flame for service."

Oh she had the will,
The courage, resolution; but at last
They broke her down. And this is how it was:
Her love for someone gave her zeal and grace
For watching, working, caring for the sick.
Her heart was in the cause too — but this love
Gave beauty, passion to it. All her men
Stretched out to kiss her hands. It may be true
The wounded soldier is a grateful soul.
But in her case they felt a warmer flame,
A greater tenderness. So she won her spurs,
And honors, was beloved, she had a brain,
A fine intelligence. Then at the height
Of her success, she disobeyed a doctor —
He was a pigmy — Elenor knew more
Than he did, but you know the discipline:
War looses all the hatreds, meanest traits
Together with the noblest, so she crumpled,
Was disciplined for this. About this time
A letter to the head nurse came — there was
A Miriam Fay, who by some wretched fate
Was always after Elenor — it was she

Who wrote the letter, and the letter said
To keep a watch on Elenor, lest she snag
Some officer or soldier. Elenor,
Who had no caution, venturesome and brave,
Wrote letters more than frank to one she loved
Whose tenor leaked out through the censorship.
Her lover sent her telegrams, all opened,
And read first by the head nurse. So at last
Too much was known, and Elenor was eyed,
And whispers ran around. Those ugly girls,
Who never had a man, were wagging tongues,
And still her service was so radiant,
So generous and skillful she survived,
Helped by the officers, the leading doctors,
Who liked her and defended her, perhaps
In hopes of winning her — you know the game!
It was through them she went to Nice; but when
She came back to her duty all was ready
To catch her and destroy her — envy played
Its part, as you can see.

Our unit broke,
And some of us were sent to Germany,
And some of us to other places — all
Went with some chum, associate. But Elenor,
Who was cut off from every one she knew,
And shipped out like an animal to be
With strangers, nurses, doctors, wholly strange.
The head nurse passed the word along to watch her.
And thus it was her spirit, once aflame

For service and for country, fed and brightened
By love for someone, thus was left to burn
In darkness and in filth.

The hospital
Was cold, the rain poured, and the mud was frightful —
Poor Elenor was writing me — the food
Was hardly fit to eat. To make it worse
They put her on night duty for a month.
Smallpox broke out and they were quarantined.
A nurse she chose to be her friend was stricken
With smallpox, died and left her all alone.
One rainy morning she heard guns and knew
A soldier had been stood against the wall.
He was a boy from Texas, driven mad
By horror and by drink, had killed a Frenchman.
She had the case of crazy men at night,
And one of them got loose and knocked her down,
And would have killed her, had an orderly
Not come in time. And she was cold at night,
Sat bundled up so much she scarce could walk
There in that ward on duty. Everywhere
They thwarted her and crossed her, she was nagged,
Brow-beaten, driven, hunted and besought
For favors, for the word was well around
She was the kind who could be captured — false,
The girl was good whatever she had done.
All this she suffered, and her lover now
Had cast her off, it seems, had ceased to write,

Had gone back to America — even then
They did not wholly break her.

But I ask
What soldier or what nurse retained his faith,
The splendor of his flame? I wish to God
They'd pass a law and make it death to write
Or speak of war as glory, or as good.
What good can come of hatred, greed and murder?
War licenses these passions, legalizes
All infamies. They talk of cruelties —
We shot the German captives — and I nursed
A boy who shot a German, with two others
Rushed on the fallen fellow, ran him through,
Through eyes and throat with bayonets. The world
Is better, is it? And if Indians scalped
Our women for the British, and if Sherman
Cut through the south with sword and flame, to-day
Such terrors should not be, we are improved!
Yes, hate and lust have changed, and maniac rage,
And rum has lost its potency to fire
A nerve that sickens at the bloody work
Where men are butchered as you shoot and slash
An animal for food!

Well, now suppose
The preachers who preach Jesus meek and mild,
But fulminate for slaughter, when the game
Of money turns its thumbs down; if your statesmen
With hardened arteries and hardened hearts,

Who make a cult of patriotism, gain
Their offices and livelihood thereby;
Your emperors and kings and chancellors,
Who glorify themselves and win sometimes
Lands for their people; and your editors
Who whip the mob to fury, bellies fat,
Grown cynical, and rich, who cannot lose,
No matter what we suffer — if we nurses,
And soldiers fail; your patriotic shouters
Of murder and of madness, von Bernhardis,
Treitschkes, making pawns of human life
To shape a destiny they can't control —
Your bankers and your merchants — all the gang
Who shout for war and pay the orators,
Arrange the music — if I say — this crowd
Finds us, the nurses and the soldiers, cold,
Our fire of youth and faith beyond command,
Too wise to be enlisted or enslaved,
What will they do who shout for war so much?

And haven't we, the nurses and the soldiers
Written some million stories for the eyes
Of boys and girls to read these fifty years?
And if they read and understand, no war
Can come again. They can't have war without
The spirit of your Elenor Murrays — no!

So Mary Black went on, and Merival
Gave liberty to her to talk her mind.
The jury smiled or looked intense for words

So graphic of the horrors of the war.
Then David Barrow asked: " Who is the man
That used to write to Elenor, went away?"
And Mary Black replied, " We do not know;
I do not know a girl who ever knew.
I only know that Elenor wept and grieved,
And did her duty like a little soldier.
It was some man who came to France, because
The word went round he had gone back, and left
The service, or the service there in France
Had left. Some said he'd gone to England, some
America. He must have been an American,
Or rather in America when she sailed,
Because she went off happy. In New York
Saw much of him before we sailed."

And then
The Reverend Maiworm juryman spoke up —
This Mary Black had left the witness chair —
And asked if Gregory Wenner went to France.
The coroner thought not, but would inquire.

Jane Fisher was a friend of Elenor Murray's
And held the secret of a pack of letters
Which Elenor Murray left. And on a day
She talks with Susan Hamilton, a friend.
Jane Fisher has composed a letter to
A lawyer in New York, who has the letters —
At least it seems so — and to get the letters,
And so fulfill the trust which Elenor

Had left to Jane. Meantime the coroner
Had heard somehow about the letters, or
That Jane knows something — she is anxious now,
And in a flurry, does not wish to go
Down to LeRoy and tell her story. So
She talks with Susan Hamilton like this:

JANE FISHER

Jane Fisher says to Susan Hamilton,
That Coroner has no excuse to bring
You, me before him. There are many too
Who could throw light on Elenor Murray's life
Besides the witnesses he calls to tell
The cause of death: could he call us and hear
About the traits we know, he should have us.
What do we know of Elenor Murray's death?
Why, not a thing, unless her death began
With Simeon Strong and Gregory Wenner — then
I could say something, for she told me much
About her plan to marry Simeon Strong,
And could have done so but for Gregory Wenner,
Whose fault of life combined with fault of hers
To break the faith of Simeon Strong in her.
And so what have we? Gregory Wenner's love
Poisons the love of Simeon Strong, from that
Poor Elenor Murray falls into decline;
From that, re-acts to nursing and religion,
Which leads her to the war; and from the war

JANE FISHER

Some other causes come, I know not what;
I wish I knew. And Elenor Murray dies,
Is killed or has a normal end of life.

But, Susan, Elenor Murray feasted richly
While life was with her, spite of all the pain.
If you could choose, be Elenor Murray or
Our schoolmate, Mary Marsh, which would you be?
Elenor Murray had imagination,
And courage to sustain it; Mary Marsh
Had no imagination, was afraid,
Could not envision life in Europe, married
And living there in England, threw her chance
Away to live in England, was content,
And otherwise not happy but to lift
Her habitation from the west of town
And settle on the south side, wed a man
Whose steadiness and business sense made sure
A prosperous uniformity of life.
Life does not enter at your door and seek you,
And pour her gifts into your lap. She drops
The chances and the riches here and there.
They find them who fly forth, as faring birds
Know northern marshes, rice fields in the south;
While the dull turtle waddles in his mud.
The bird is slain perhaps, the turtle lives,
But which has known the thrills?

Well, on a time
Elenor Murray, Janet Stearns, myself

Thought we would see Seattle and Vancouver,
We had saved money teaching school that year —
The plan was Elenor Murray's. So we sailed
To 'Frisco from Los Angeles, saw 'Frisco
By daylight, but to see the town by night
Was Elenor Murray's wish, and up to now
We had no men, had found none. Elenor said,
"Let's go to Palo Alto, find some men."
We landed in a blinding sun, and walked
About the desolate campus, but no men.
And Janet and myself were tired and hot;
But Elenor, who never knew fatigue,
Went searching here and there, and left us sitting
Under a palm tree waiting. Hours went by,
Two hours, I think, when she came down the walk
A man on either side. She brought them up
And introduced them. They were gay and young,
Students with money. Then the fun began:
We wished to see the place, must hurry back
To keep engagements in the city — whew!
How Elenor Murray baited hooks for us
With words about the city and our plans;
What fun we three had had already there!
Until at last these fellows begged to come,
Return with us to 'Frisco, be allowed
To join our party. "Could we manage it?"
Asked Elenor Murray, "do you think we can?"
We fell into the play and talked it over,
Considered this and that, resolved the thing,
And said at last to come, and come they did. . . .

JANE FISHER

Well, such a time in 'Frisco. For you see
Our money had been figured down to cents
For what we planned to do. These fellows helped,
We scarcely had seen 'Frisco but for them.
They bought our dinners, paid our way about
Through China Town and so forth, but we kept
Our staterooms on the boat, slept on the boat.
And after three days' feasting sailed away
With bouquets for each one of us.

But this girl
Could never get enough, must on and on
See more, have more sensations, never tired.
And when we saw Vancouver then the dream
Of going to Alaska entered her.
I had no money, Janet had no money
To help her out, and Elenor was short.
We begged her not to try it — what a will!
She set her jaw and said she meant to go.
And when we missed her for a day, behold
We find her, she's a cashier in a store,
And earning money there to take the trip.
Our boat was going back, we left her there.
I see her next when school commences, ruling
Her room of pupils at Los Angeles.
The summer after this she wandered east,
Was now engaged to Simeon Strong, but writing
To Gregory Wenner, saw him in Chicago.
She traveled to New York, he followed her.
She was a girl who had to live her life,

Could not live through another, found no man
Whose life sufficed for hers, must live herself,
Be individual.

And en route for France
She wrote me from New York, was seeing much
Of Margery, an aunt — I never knew her,
But sensed an evil in her, and a mind
That used the will of Elenor Murray — how
Or why, I knew not. But she wrote to me
This Margery had brought her lawyer in,
There in New York to draw a document,
And put some letters in a safety box.
Whose letters? Gregory Wenner's? I don't know.
She told me much of secrets, but of letters
That needed for their preciousness a box,
A lawyer to arrange the matter, nothing.
For if there was another man, she felt
Too shamed, no doubt, to tell me: —"This is he,
The love I sought, the great reality,"
When she had said as much of Gregory Wenner.
But now a deeper matter: with this letter
She sent a formal writing giving me
Charge of these letters, if she died to give
The letters to the writer. I'm to know
The identity of the writer, so she planned
When I obtain them. How about this lawyer,
And Margery the aunt? What shall I do?
Write to this lawyer what my duty is
Appointed me of her, go to New York?

JANE FISHER

I must do something, for this lawyer has,
As I believe, no knowledge of my place
In this affair. Who has the box's key?
This lawyer, or the aunt — I have no key —
And if they have the key, or one of them,
And enter, take the letters, look! our friend
Gets stains upon her memory; or the man
Who wrote the letters finds embarrassment.
Somehow, I think, these letters hold a secret,
The deepest of her life and cruelest,
And figured in her death. My dearest friend,
What if they brought me to the coroner,
If I should get these letters, and they learned
I had them, this relation to our Elenor!
Yet how can I neglect to write this lawyer
And tell him Elenor Murray gave to me
This power of disposition?

Come what may
I must write to this lawyer. Here I write
To get the letters, and obey the wish
Of our dear friend. Our friend who never could
Carry her ventures to success, but always
Just at the prosperous moment wrecked her hope.
She really wished to marry Simeon Strong.
Then why imperil such a wish by keeping
This Gregory Wenner friendship living, go
About with Gregory Wenner, fill the heart
Of Simeon Strong with doubt?

Oh well, my friend,
We wonder at each other, I at you,
And you at me, for doing this or that.
And yet I think no man or woman acts
Without a certain logic in the act
Of nature or of circumstance.

Look here,
This letter to the lawyer. Will it do?
I think so. If it brings the letters — well!
If not, I'll get them somehow, it must be,
I loved her, faults and all, and so did you. . . .

So while Jane Fisher pondered on her duty,
But didn't write the letter to the lawyer,
Who had the charge of Elenor Murray's letters,
The lawyer, Henry Baker, in New York
Finds great perplexity. Sometimes a case
Walks in a lawyer's office, makes his future,
Or wrecks his health, or brings him face to face
With some one rising from the mass of things,
Faces and circumstance, that ends his life.
So Henry Baker took such chances, taking
The custody of these letters.

James Rex Hunter
Is partner of this Baker, sees at last
Merival and tells him how it was
With Baker at the last; he died because
Of Elenor Murray's letters, Hunter told

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

The coroner at the Waldorf. Dramatized
His talk with Lawyer Baker in these words: —

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

One partner may consult another — James,
Here is a matter you must help me with,
It's coming to a head.

Well, to be plain,
And to begin at the beginning first,
I knew a woman up on Sixty-third,
Have known her since I got her a divorce,
Married, divorced, before — last night we quarreled,
I must do something, hear me and advise.

She is a woman notable for eyes
Bright for their oblong lights in them; they seem
Like crockery vases, rookwood, where the light
Shows spectrally almost in squares and circles.
Her skin is fair, nose hooked, of amorous flesh,
A feaster and a liver, thinks and plans
Of money, how to get it. And this husband
Whom she divorced last summer went away,
And left her to get on as best she could.
All legal matters settled, we went driving —
This story can be skipped.

Last night we dined,
Afterward went to her apartment. First
She told me at the dinner that her niece
Named Elenor Murray died some days ago.
I sensed what she was after — here's the point: —
She followed up the theme when we returned
To her apartment, where we quarreled. You see
I would not do her bidding, left her mad,
In silent wrath after some bitter words.
I managed her divorce as I have said,
Then I stepped in as lover, months had passed.
When Elenor Murray came here to New York,
I met her at the apartment of the aunt
Whose name is Margery Camp. Before, she said
Her niece was here, was happy and in love
But sorrowful for leaving, just the talk
That has no meaning till you see the subject
Or afterwards, perhaps; it passes in
One ear and out the other. Then at last
One afternoon I met this Elenor Murray
When I go up to call on Margery Camp.
The staging of the matter is like this:
The niece looks fagged, is sitting on the couch,
Has loosed her collar for her throat to feel
The air about it, for the day is hot.
And Margery Camp goes out, brings in a pitcher
Of absinthe cocktails, so we drink. I sit,
Begin to study what is done, and look
This Elenor Murray over, get the thought
That somehow Margery Camp has taken Elenor

In her control for something, has begun
To use her, manage her, is coiling her
With dominant will or cunning. Then I look,
See Margery Camp observing Elenor Murray,
Who drinks the absinthe, and in Margery's eyes
I see these parallelograms of light
Just like a vase of crockery, there she stands,
Her face like ivory, and laughs and shows
Her marvelous teeth, smooths with her shapely hands
The skirt upon her hips. Somehow I feel
She is a soul who watches passion work.
Then Elenor Murray rouses, gets her spirits
Out of the absinthe, rises and exclaims:
"I'm better now;" and Margery Camp speaks up,
Poor child, in intonation like a doll
That speaks from reeds of steel, no sympathy
Or meaning in the words. The interview
Seems spooky to me, cold and sinister.
We drink again and then we drink again.
And what with her fatigue and lowered spirits,
This Elenor Murray drifts in talk and mood
With so much drink. At last this Margery Camp
Says suddenly: "You'll have to help my niece,
There is a matter you must manage for her,
We've talked it over; in a day or two
Before she goes away, we'll come to you."
I took them out to dinner, after dinner
Drove Margery Camp to her apartment, then
Went down with Elenor Murray to her place.

Then in a day or two, one afternoon
Margery Camp and Elenor Murray came
Here to my office with a bundle, which
This Margery Camp was carrying, rather large.
And Margery Camp was bright and keen as winter.
But Elenor Murray seemed a little dull,
Abstracted as of drink, or thought perhaps.
After the greeting and preliminaries,
Margery said to Elenor: " Better tell
What we have come for, get it done and go."
Then Elenor Murray said: " Here are some letters,
I've tied them in this package, and I wish
To put them in a safety box, give you
One key and keep the other, leave with you
A sealed instruction, which, in case I die,
While over-seas, you may break open, read
And follow, if you will." She handed me
A writing signed by her which merely read
What I have told you — here it is — you see:
" When legal proof is furnished I am dead,
Break open the sealed letter which will give
Instruction for you." So I took the trust,
Went with these women to a vault and placed
The letters in the box, gave her a key,
Kept one myself. They left. At dinner time
I joined them, saw more evidence of the will
Of Margery Camp controlling Elenor's.
Which seemed in part an older woman's power
Against a younger woman's, and in part
Something less innocent. We ate and drank,

I took them to their places as before,
And didn't see this Elenor again.

But now last night when I see Margery
She says at once, " My niece is dead ; " goes on
To say, no other than herself has care
Or interest in her, was estranged from father,
And mother too, herself the closest heart
In all the world, and therefore she must look
After the memory of the niece, and adds :
" She came to you through me, I picked you out
To do this business." So she went along
With this and that, advancing and retreating
To catch me, bind me. Well, I saw her game,
Sat non-committal, sipping wine, but keeping
The wits she hoped I'd lose, as I could see.

After the dinner we went to her place
And there she said these letters might contain
Something to smudge the memory of her niece,
She wished she had insisted on the plan
Of having one of the keys, the sealed instruction
Made out and left with her ; being her aunt,
The closest heart in the world to Elenor Murray,
That would have been the right way. But she said
Her niece was willful and secretive, too,
Not over wise, but now that she was dead
It was her duty to reform the plan,
Do what was best, and take control herself.

So working to the point by devious ways
She said at last: "You must give me the key,
The sealed instruction: I'll go to the box,
And get the letters, do with them as Elenor
Directed in the letter; for I think,
Cannot believe it different, that my niece
Has left these letters with me, so directs
In that sealed letter." "Then if that be true,
Why give the key to me, the letter? — no
This is a trust, a lawyer would betray,
A sacred trust to do what you request."
I saw her growing angry. Then I added:
"I have no proof your niece is dead:" "My word
Is good enough," she answered, "we are friends,
You are my lover, as I thought; my word
Should be sufficient." And she kept at me
Until I said: "I can't give you the key,
And if I did they would not let you in,
You are not registered as a deputy
To use the key." She did not understand,
Did not believe me, but she tacked about,
And said: "You can do this, take me along
When you go to the vault and open the box,
And break the letter open which she gave."
I only answered: "If I find your niece
Has given these letters to you, you shall have
The letters, but I think the letters go
Back to the writer, and if that's the case,
I'll send them to the writer."

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

Here at last
She lost control, took off her mask and stormed:
" We'll see about it. You will scarcely care
To have the matter aired in court. I'll see
A lawyer, bring a suit and try it out,
And see if I, the aunt, am not entitled
To have my niece's letters and effects,
Whatever's in the package. I am tired
And cannot see you longer. Take five days
To think the matter over. If you come
And do what I request, no suit, but if
You still refuse, the courts can settle it."
And so I left her.

In a day or two
I read of Elenor Murray's death. It seems
The coroner investigates her death.
She died mysteriously. Well, then I break
The sealed instruction, look! I am to send
The package to Jane Fisher in Chicago.
We know, of course, Jane Fisher did not write
The letters, that the letters are a man's.
What is the inference? Why, that Elenor Murray
Pretended to comply, obey her aunt,
Yet slipped between her fingers, did not wish
The aunt or me to know who wrote the letters.
Feigned full submission, frankness with the aunt,
Yet hid her secret, hid it from the aunt
Beyond her finding out, if I observe

The trust imposed, keep hands of Margery Camp
From getting at the letters.

Now two things:
Suppose the writer of the letters killed
This Elenor Murray, is somehow involved
In Elenor Murray's death? If that's the case,
Should not these letters reach the coroner?
To help enforce the law is higher trust
Than doing what a client has commanded.
And secondly, if Margery Camp should sue,
My wife will learn the secret, bring divorce.
Three days remain before the woman's threat
Is ripe to execute. Think over this.
We'll talk again — I really need advice. . . .

So Hunter told the coroner. Then resumed
The matter was a simple thing: I said
To telegraph the coroner. You are right:
Those letters give a clue perhaps, your trust
Is first to see the law enforced. And yet
I saw he was confused and drinking too,
For fear his wife would learn of Margery Camp.
I added, for that matter open the box,
Take out the letters, find who wrote them, send
A telegram to the coroner giving the name
Of the writer of the letters. Well, he nodded,
Seemed to consent to anything I said.
And Hunter left me, leaving me in doubt
What he would do. And what is next? Next day

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

He's in the hospital and has pneumonia.
I take a cab to see him, but I find
He is too sick to see, is out of mind.
In three days he is dead. His wife comes in
And tells me worry killed him — knows the truth
About this Margery Camp, oh, so she said.
Had sent a lawyer to her husband asking
For certain letters of an Elenor Murray.
And that her husband stood between the fire
Of some exposure by this Margery Camp,
Or suffering these letters to be used
By Margery Camp against the writer for
A bit of money. This was Mrs. Hunter's
Interpretation. Well, the fact is clear
That Hunter feared this Margery Camp — was scared
About his wife who in some way had learned
Just at this time of Margery Camp — I think
Was called up, written to. Between it all
Poor Hunter's worry, far too fast a life,
He broke and died. And now you know it all.
I've learned no client enters at your door
And nothing casual happens in the day
That may not change your life, or bring you death.
And Hunter in a liaison with Margery
Is brought within the scope of Elenor's
Life and takes his mortal hurt and dies.

So much for riffles in New York. We turn
Back to LeRoy and see the riffles there,

See all of them together. Loveridge Chase
Receives a letter from a New York friend,
A secret service man who trails and spies
On Henry Baker, knows about the letters,
And writes to Loveridge Chase and says to him:
"That Elenor Murray dying near LeRoy
Left letters in New York. I trailed the aunt
Of Elenor Murray, Margery Camp. Also
A lawyer, Henry Baker, who controls
A box with letters left by Elenor Murray —
So for the story. Why not join with me
And get these letters? There is money in it,
Perhaps, who knows? I work for Mrs. Hunter —
She wants the letters placed where they belong,
And wants the man who killed this Elenor Murray
Punished as he should be. Go see the coroner
And get the work of bringing back the letters."
And Chase came to the coroner and spoke:

LOVERIDGE CHASE

Here is the secret of the death of Elenor,
From what I learn of her, from what I know
In living, knowing women, I am clear
About this Elenor Murray. Give me power
To get the letters, power to give a bond
To indemnify the company, for you know

Letters belong to him who writes the letters;
And if the company is given bond
It will surrender them, and then you'll know
What man she loved, this Gregory Wenner or
Some other man, and if some other man,
Whether he caused her death.

The coroner
And Loveridge Chase sat in the coroner's office
And talked the matter over. And the coroner,
Who knew this Loveridge Chase, was wondering
Why Loveridge Chase had taken up the work
Of secret service, followed it, and asked,
" How did you come to give your brains to this,
Who could do other things?" And Loveridge said:
" A woman made me, I went round the world
As jackie once, was brought into this world
By a mother good and wise, but took from her,
My father, someone, sense of chivalry
Too noble for this world, a pity too,
Abused too much by women. I came back,
Was hired in a bank; had I gone on
By this time had been up in banking circles,
But something happened. You can guess, I think
It was a woman, was my wife Leone.
It matters nothing here, except I knew
This Elenor Murray through my wife. These two
Were schoolmates, even chums. I'll get these letters
If you commission me. The fact is this:

I think this Elenor Murray and Leone
Were kindred spirits, and it does me good
Now that I'm living thus without a wife
To ferret out this matter of Elenor Murray,
Perhaps this way, or somewhere on the way,
Find news of my Leone; what life she lives,
And where she is. I'm curious still, you see."
Then Coroner Merival, who had not heard
Of Elenor Murray's letters in New York
Before this talk of Loveridge Chase, who heard
This story and analysis of Leone
Mixed in with other talk, and got a light
On Elenor Murray, said: "I know your work,
Know you as well, have confidence in you,
Make ready to go, and bring the letters back."

And on the day that Loveridge Chase departs
To get the letters in New York, Bernard,
A veteran of Belleau, married that day
To Amy Whidden, on a lofty dune
At Millers, Indiana, with his bride —
Long quiet, tells her something of the war.
These soldiers cannot speak what they have lived.
But Elenor Murray helps him; for the talk
Of Elenor Murray runs the rounds, so many
Stations whence the talk is sent: — the men
Or women who had known her, came in touch
Somehow with her. These newly wedded two

AT NICE

Go out to see blue water, yellow sand,
And watch the white caps pat the sky, and hear
The intermittent whispers of the waves.
And here Bernard, the soldier, tells his bride
Of Elenor Murray and their days at Nice:

AT NICE

Dear, let me tell you, safe beside you now,
Your hand in mine, here from this peak of sand,
Under this pine tree, where the wild grapes spill
Their fragrance on the lake breeze, from that oak
Half buried in the sand, devoured by sand —
The water of the lake is just as blue
As the sea is there at Nice, the caps as white
As foam around Mont Boron, Cap Ferrat.
Here let me tell you things you do not know,
I could not write, repeat what well you know,
How love of you sustained me, never changed,
But through a love was brighter, flame of the torch
I bore for you in battle, as an incense
Cast in a flame awakes the deeper essence
Of fire and makes it mount.

And I am here —
Here now with you at last — the war is over —
I have this aching side, these languid mornings,
And pray for that old strength which never knew

Fatigue or pain — but I am here with you,
You are my bride now, I have earned you, dear.
I fought the fight, endured the endless days
When rain fell, days of absence, and the days
Of danger when my only prayer was this:
Give me, O God, to see you once again.
This is the deepest rapture, tragedy
Of this our life, beyond our minds to fathom,
A thing to stand in awe of, touch in reverence,
That we — we mortals, find in one another
Such source of ecstasy, of pain. My love,
I lay there in the hospital so weak,
Flopping my hands upon the coverlet,
And praying God to live. In such an hour
To be away from you! There are no words
To speak the weary hours of fear and thought,
In such an absence, facing death, perhaps,
A burial in France, with thoughts of you,
Mourning some years, perhaps, healed partly then
And wedded to another; then at last
Myself forgot, or nearly so, and life
Taking you on with duties, house and children;
And my poor self forgotten, gone to dust,
Wasted along the soil of France.

Thank God,
I'm here with you — it's real, all this is true:
The roar of the water, sand-hills, infinite sky,
The gulls, the distant smoke, the smell of grapes,
The haze of amethyst behind us there,

AT NICE

In those ravines of stunted oak and pine.
All this is real. This is America.
The very air we find from coast to coast,
The sensible air for lungs seems freer here.
I had no sooner landed in New York
Than my arms said stretch out, there's room to stretch.
I walked along the streets so happy, light
Of heart and heard the newsboys, shop-girls talk:
" O, what a cheese he is," or " beat it now "—
I can't describe the thrill I had to hear
This loose abandoned slang spilled all around,
Like coppers soiled from handling, but so real,
And having power to purchase memories
Of what I loved and lost awhile, my land!
Well, then I wanted roast-beef, corn on cob,
And had them in an hour at early lunch.
I telegraphed you, gave New York a day,
And came to you. We are together now,
We do not dream, do we? We are together
After the war, to live our lives and grow
And make of love, experience, life more rich.
That's what you say to me — it shall be so.

Now I will tell you what I promised to tell
About my illness and the battle — well,
I wrote you of my illness, only hinted
About the care I had, that is the point;
'Twas care alone that saved me, I was ill
Beyond all words to tell. And all the while
I suffered, fearing I would die; but then

I could not bear to think I should not rise
To join my fellows, battle once again,
And charge across the trenches, take no part
In crushing down the Prussian. For I knew
He would be crushed at last. I could not bear
To think I should not take a hand in that,
Be there when he lay fallen, victory
From voice to voice should pass along the lines.
Well, for some weeks I lay there, and at last
Words dropped around me that the time was near
For blows to count — would I be there to strike?
Could I get well in time? And every day
A sweet voice said: "You're better, oh it's great
How you are growing stronger; yesterday
Your fever was but one degree, to-day
It is a little higher. You must rest,
Not think so much! It may be normal perhaps
To-morrow or the next day. In a week
You will be up and gaining, and the battle
Will not be fought before then, I am sure,
And not until you're well and strong again."
And thus it went from day to day. Such hands
Washed my hot face and bathed me, tucked me in,
And fed me too. And once I said to her:
" I love a girl, I must get well to fight,
I must get well to go to her." And she,
It was the nurse I spoke to, took my hand,
And turned away with tears. You see it's there
We see the big things, nothing else, the things
That stand out like the mountains, lesser things

Are lost like little hillocks under the shadows
Of great emotions, hopes, realities.
Well, so it went. And on a day she leaned
Above my face to smooth the pillow out.
And from her heart a golden locket fell,
And dangled by the silver chain. The locket
Flew open and I saw a face within it,
That is I saw there was a face, but saw
No eyes or hair, saw nothing to limn out
The face so I would know it.

Then I said:
" You have a lover, nurse." She straightened up
And questioned me: " Have you been ill before?
Do you know of the care a nurse can give,
And what she can withhold?" I answered "Yes."
And then she asked: " Have you felt in my hands
Great tenderness, solicitude, even prayer?"—
Here, sweetheart, do not let your eyes get moist,
I'll tell you everything, for you must see
How spirits work together, love to love
Passes and does its work.

Well, it was true,
I felt her tenderness, which was like prayer,
And so I answered her: " If I get well,
You will have cured me with your human love."
And then she said: " Our unit reached this place
When there was neither stoves nor lights. At night
We went to bed by candles. Stumbled around

Amid the trunks and beds by candle light.
Well, one of us would light a candle, then
Each, one by one, the others lighted theirs
From this one down the room. And so we passed
The light along. And as a candle died,
The others burned, to which the light was passed.
Well, now," she said, " that is a figure of love:
We get the flame from someone, light another,
Make brighter light by holding flame to flame —
Sometimes we searched for something, held two candles
Together for a greater light. And so,
My soldier, I have given you the care
That comes from love — of country and the cause,
But brightened, warmed by one from whom the flame
Was passed to me, a love that took my hand
And warmed it, made it tender for that love,
Which said pour out and serve, take love for him
And use it in the cause, by using hands
To bathe, to soothe, to smooth a pillow down,
To heal, sustain."

The truth is, dearest heart,
I had not lived, I think, except for her.
And there we were: I filled with love for you,
And therefore praying to get well and fight,
Be worthy of your love, and there she was
With love for someone, striving with that love
To nurse me through and give me well and strong
To battle in the cause.

AT NICE

Then I got well
And joined my company. She took my hand
As I departed, closed her eyes and said:
"May God be with you."

Well, it was Belleau,
That jungle of machine guns, like a thicket
Of rattle snakes. And there was just one thing
To clean that thicket out — we had to charge,
And so we yelled and charged. No soldier knows
How one survives in such a charge as that.
You simply yell and charge; the bullets fall
Like drops of rain around you pitter-pat;
And on you go and think: where will it get me,
The stomach or the heart or through the head?
What will it be like, sudden blackness, pain,
No pain at all? And so you charge the nests.
The fellows fell around us like tenpins,
Dropped guns, or flung them up, fell on their faces,
Or toppled backward, pitched ahead and flung
Their helmets off in pitching. And at last
I found myself half-dazed, as in a dream,
Right in a nest, two Boches facing me,
And then I saw this locket, as I saw it
Fall from her breast, it might have been a glint
Of metal, flash of firing, I don't know.
I only know I ran my bayonet
Through one of them; he fell, I stuck the other,
Then something stung my side. When I awoke
I lay upon a cot, and heard the nurses

Discuss the peace, the armistice was signed,
The war was over. Well, and in a way
We won the war, I won the war, as one
Who did his part, at least.

Then I got up,
But I was weak and dazed. They said to me
I should not cross the ocean in the winter,
My lungs might get infected; anyway,
The flu was raging. So they sent me down
To Nice upon a furlough, as I wrote.
I could not write you all I saw and heard,
It was all lovely and all memorable.

But first before I picture Nice to you,
My days at Nice, lest you have doubts and fears
When I reveal to you I saw this nurse
First on the Promenade des Anglais there,
Saw much of her in Nice, I saw at once
She was that Elenor Murray whom they found
Along the river dead; and for the rest
To make all clear, I'll tell you everything.
You see I didn't write you of this girl
And what we did there, lest you might suspect
Some vagrant mood in me concealed or glossed,
Which ended in betrayal of our love.
Eyes should look into eyes to supplement
The words of truth with light of truth, where nothing
Of thoughts that hide have chance to slip and crawl
Through eyes averted, twinklings, change of light,

Or if they do, reveal themselves, as snakes
Are seen when winding into coverts of grass.

Well, then we met upon the promenade.
She ran toward me, kissed me — oh so glad.
I told her of the battle, of my wound.
And for herself it seemed she had been ill,
Off duty for a month before she came
To Nice for health; she said as much to me.
I think she had been ill, yet I could sense,
Or seemed to sense a mystery, I don't know,
Behind her illness. Yet you understand
How it was natural we should be happy
To meet again, in Nice, too. For you see
The army life develops comradeship.
And when we meet the old life rises up
And wakes its thrills and memories. It seemed
She had been there some days when I arrived
And knew the place, and said, " I'll show you Nice."
There was a major she was waiting for,
As it turned out. He came there in a week,
We had some walks together, all the three,
And then I lost them.

But before he came
We did the bright cafés and Monte Carlo,
And here my little nurse showed something else
Besides the tender hands, the prayerful soul.
She had been taking egg-nogs, so she said,
But now she took to wine, and drink she could

Beyond all men I know. I had to stop
Or fall beneath the table, leaving her
To order more. And she would sit and weave
From right to left hip in a rhythmic way,
And cast her eyes obliquely right and left.
It was this way: The music set her thrilling,
And keeping time this way. She loved to go
Where we could see cocotes, adventurers;
Where red vitality was feasting, drinking,
And dropping gold upon the gaming table.
We sunned ourselves within the Jardin Public,
And walked the beach between the bathing places
Where they dry orange peel to make perfumes.
And in that golden sunshine by the sea
Caught whiffs of lemon blossoms, and each day
I bought her at the stands acacia,
Or red anemones — I tell you all —
There was no moment that my thought betrayed
Your heart, dear one. She had been good to me.
I saw that she was hungry for these things,
For rapture, so I gave them — you don't mind,
It came to nothing, dearest.

But at last
A different Elenor Murray than I knew
There in the hospital took shape before me.
That serving soul, that maid of humble tasks,
And sacrifice for others, and that face
Of waitress or of ingenue, day by day
Assumed sophistication, looks and lines

Of knowledge in the world, experience
In places of patrician ways. She knew
New York as well as I, cafés and shops;
Dropped pregnant hints at times that made me think
What more she knew, what she was holding back.
Until at last all she had done for me
Seemed just what mortals do to earn their bread
In any calling, made more generous, maybe,
By something in a moment's mood. In truth
The ideal showed the clogged pores in the skin
Under the light she stood in. For you know
When we see people happy we can say
Those tears were not all tears — we pitied more
Than we were wise to pity — that's the feeling:
Most men are Puritans in this, I think.
A woman dancing, drinking, makes you laugh,
And half despise yourself for great emotion
When seeing her in prayer or reverent thought.
But now I come to something more concrete:
The day before the major came we lunched
Where we could see the Mediterranean,
The clubs, hotels and villas. There she sat
All dressed in white, a knitted jacket of silk
Matching the leaves upon the trees, and looked
As fashionable as the rest. The waiter came.
She did not take the card nor order from it,
Was nonchalant, familiar, said at last:
"We want some Epernay. You have it doubtless."
The waiter bowed. I looked at Elenor,
That was the character of revealing things

I saw from day to day. For truth to tell
This Epernay might well have been charged water
For all I knew. I asked her, and she said:
" Delicious wine, not strong." And so we lunched,
And the music stormed, and lunchers gabbled, smoked,
And dandies ogled. And this Epernay
Worked in our blood and Elenor rattled on.
And she was flinging eyes from right to left
And moving rhythmically from hip to hip,
And with a finger beating out the time.
Somehow our hands touched, then she closed her eyes,
Her body shook a little and grew limp.
" What is the matter? " Then she raised her eyes
And looked me through an instant. What, my dear,
You won't hear any more? Oh, very well,
That's all, there is no more.

But after while
When things got quieter, the lunchers thinned,
The music ended, and the wine grown tame
Within our veins, she told me on a time
Some years before she was confirmed, and thought
She'd take the veil, and for two years or more
Was all absorbed in pious thoughts and works.
" But how we learn and change," she added then,
" In training we see bodies, learn to know
How thirst and hunger, needs of body cry
For daily care, become materialists,
Unmoralists a little in the sense
That any book, or theories of the soul

Should tie the body from its natural needs.
Though I accept the faith, no less than ever,
That God is and the Savior is and spirit
Is no less real than body, has its needs,
Separate or through the body."

Oh, that girl!
She made me guess and wonder. But next day
I had a fresh surprise, the major came
And she was changed completely. I forgot,
I must tell you what happened after lunch.
We rose and she grew impish, stood and laughed
As if the secret of the laugh was hers
Beyond the concrete matter of the laugh.
She said, " I'll show you something beautiful."
We started out to see it, walked the road
Around the foot of Castle Hill. You know
The wind blows gustily at Nice; and so
All of a sudden went my hat, way up,
Far off, and instantly such laughter rose,
And boisterous shouts that made me think at once
I had been tricked, somehow. It is this way:
The gamins loiter there to watch the victims
Who lose their hats. And Elenor sat down,
And laughed until she cried. I do not know,
Perhaps I was not amorous enough
At luncheon and she pranked me for revenge.
Well, then the major came, he took my place.
I was the third one in the party now,

But saw them every day. What did we do?
No Monte Carlo now, nor ordering
Without the card, she was completely changed,
Demure again, all words of lovely things:
The war had changed the world, had lifted up
The spirit of man to visions, and the major
Adored her, drank it in. And we explored
Limpia and the Old Town, looked aloft
At Mont Cau d'Aspremont, picked hellebore,
And orchids in the gorges, saw St. Pons,
The Valley of Hepaticas, sunned ourselves
Within the Jardin Public, where the children
Play riotously; and Elenor would draw
A straying child to her and say: "You darling."
I saw her do this once and dry her eyes
And to the major say: "They are so lovely,
I had to give up teaching school, the children
Stirred my emotions till I could not bear
To be among them." And to make an end,
I spent the parts of three days with these two.
And on the last day we went to the summit
Of the Corinche Road, and saw the sea and Europe
Spread out before us — oh, you cannot know
The beauty of it, dear, until you see it.
And Elenor sat down as in a trance,
And looked and did not speak for minutes. Then
She said: "How pure a place this is — it's nature,
And I can worship here, this makes you hate
The cafés and the pleasures of the town."
What was this woman, dear, what was her soul?

Or was she half and half? Oh, after all,
I am a hostile mixture, so are you.

And so I drifted out, and only stayed
A day or two beyond that afternoon.
I took a last walk on the Promenade;
At last saw just ahead of me these two,
His arm was fast in hers, they sauntered on
As if in serious talk. As I came up,
I greeted them and said good-bye again.

Where is the major? Did the major steal
The heart of Elenor Murray, speed her death?
They could have married. Why did she return?
Or did the major follow her? Well, dear,
Here is the story, truthful to a fault.
My soul is yours, I kept it true to you.
Hear how the waters roar upon the sand!
I close my eyes and almost can believe
We are together on the Corniche Road.

Well, it may never be that Merival
Heard from Bernard of Elenor at Nice,
Although he knew it sometime, knew as well
Her service in the war had nerved the men
And by that much had put the Germans down.
America at the fateful moment lent
Her strength to bring the war's end. Elenor
Was one of many to cross seas and bring
Life strength against the emperor, once secure,

And throned in power against such phagocytes
As Elenor Murray, Bernard, even kings.
And sawing wood at Amerongen all
He thought of was of brains and monstrous hearts
Which sent the phagocytes from America,
England and France to eat him up at last.

One day an American soldier, so 'tis said
Someone told Merival, was walking near
The house at Amerongen, saw a man
With drooped mustache and whitened beard approach,
Two mastiffs walked beside him. As he passed
Unrecognized, the soldier to a mate
Spoke up and said: "What hellish dogs are those? —
Like Bismarck used to have; I saw a picture
Of Bismarck with his dogs." The drooped mustache
Turned nervously and took the soldiers in,
Then strode ahead. The emperor was stunned
To hear an American soldier use a knife
As sharp as that.

But Elenor at Nice
Walked with the major as Bernard has told.
And this is wrinkled water, dark and far
From Merival, unknown to him. He hears,
And this alone, she went from Nice to Florence,
Was ill there in a convent, we shall see.
This is the tale that Irma Leese related
To Coroner Merival in a leisure hour:

THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY

THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY AT NICE

Elenor Murray and Petain, the major,
The Promenade des Anglais walked at Nice.
A cloud was over him, and in her heart
A growing grief.

He knew her at the hospital,
First saw her face among a little group
Of faces at a grave when rain was falling,
The burial of a nurse, when Elenor's face
Was bathed in tears and strained with agony.
And after that he saw her in the wards;
Heard soldiers, whom she nursed, say as she passed,
Dear little soul, sweet soul, or take her hand
In gratitude and kiss it.

But as a stream
Flows with clear water even with the filth
Of scum, debris that drifts beside the current
Of crystal water, nor corrupts it, keeps
Its poisoned, heavier medium apart,
So at the hospital where the nurses' hands
Poured sacrifice, heroic love, the filth
Of envy, anger, malice, plots, intrigue
Kept pace with pure devotion, noble work
For suffering and the cause.

The major helped
To free the rules for Elenor Murray so
She might recuperate at Nice, and said:
"Go and await me, I shall join you there.
For in my trouble I must have a friend,
A woman to assuage me, give me light,
And ever since I saw you by that grave,
And saw you cross yourself, and bow your head
And watched your services along the wards
Among the sick and dying, I have felt
The soul of you, its human tenderness,
Its prodigal power of giving, pouring forth
Itself for others. And you seem a soul
Where nothing of our human frailty
Has come to dim the flame that burns in you,
You are all light, I think."

And Elenor Murray
Looked down and said: "There is no soul like that.
This hospital, the war itself, reflects
The good and bad together of our souls.
You are a boy — oh such a boy to see
All good in me."

And Major Petain said:
"At least you have not found dishonor here
As I have found it, for a lust of flesh
A weakness and a trespass."

THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY

This was after
The hospital was noisy with the talk
Of Major Petain and his shame, the hand
Of discipline lay on him.

Elenor Murray
Looked steadily in his eyes, but only said:
" We mortals know each other but a little,
Nor guess each other's secrets." And she glanced
A moment at the tragedy that had come
To her at Paris on her furlough there,
And of its train of sorrows, even now
Her broken health and failure in the work
As consequence to that, and how it brought
The breaking of her passionate will and dream
To serve and not to fail — she glanced at this
A moment as she faced him, looked at him.
Then as she turned away: " There is one thing
That I must tell you, it is fitting now,
I love and am beloved. But if you come
To Nice and I can help you, come, if talk
And any poor advice of mine can help."

So Major Petain, Elenor Murray walked
The Promenade at Nice, arm fast in arm.
And Major Petain to relieve his heart
Told all the tragedy that had come to him:

" Duty to France was first with me where love
Was paramount with you, if I divine

Your heart, America's, at least a love
Unmixed of other feelings as may be.
What could you find here, if you seek no husband,
Even in seeing France so partially?
What in adventure, lures to bring you here,
Where peril, labor are? You either came
To expiate your soul, or as you say,
To make more worthy of this man beloved
Back in America your love for him.
Dear idealist, I give my faith to you,
And all your words. But as I said 'twas duty,
Then dreams of freedom, Europe's chains struck off,
The menace of the German crushed to earth
That fired me as a soldier, trained to go
When France should need me. So it is you saw
France go about this business calm and stern,
And patient for the prize, or if 'twere lost
Then brave to meet the future as France met
The arduous years that followed Metz, Sedan."

" But had I been American to the core,
Would I have put the sweet temptation by?
However flamed with zeal had I said no
When lips like hers were offered? Oh, you see
Whatever sun-light gilds the mountain tops
Rich grass grows in the valleys, herds will feed,
Though rising suns put glories on the heights.
And herds will run and stumble over rocks,
Break fences and encounter beasts of prey
To get the grass that's sweetest."

"To begin
I met her there in Paris. In a trice
We loved each other, wrote, made vows, she pledged
The consummation. There was danger here,
Great danger, as you know, for her and me.
And yet it never stopped us, gave us fear.
And then I schemed and got her through the lines,
Took all the chances."

"Danger was not all:
There was my knowledge of her husband's love,
His life immaculate, his daily letters.
He put by woman chances that arose
With saying, I am married, am beloved,
I love my wife, all said so earnestly
We could not joke him, though behind his back
Some said: He trusts her, but he'd better watch;
At least no sense of passing good things by.
I sat with him at mess, I saw him read
The letters that she wrote him, face of light
Devouring eyes. The others rallied him;
But I was like a man who knows a plot
To take another's life, but keeps the secret,
Eats with the victim, does not warn him, makes
Himself thereby a party to the plot.
Or like a man who knows a fellow man
Has some insidious disease beginning,
And hears him speak with unconcern of it,
And does not tell him what to do, you know,
And let him go to death. And just for her,

The rapture of a secret love I choked
All risings of an honest manhood, mercy,
Honor with self and him. Oh, well you know
The isolation, hunger of us soldiers,
I only need to hint of these. But now
I see these well endured for sake of peace
And quiet memory."

"For here we stood
Just 'round the corner in that long arcade
That runs between our building, next to yours.
And this is what I hear — the husband's voice,
Which well I knew, the officer's in command:
'Why have you brought your wife here?' asked the officer.
'Pardon, I have not done so,' said the husband.
'You're adding falsehood to the offense; you know
The rules forbid your wife to pass the lines.'
'Pardon, I have not brought her,' he exclaimed
In passionate earnestness.

"Well, there we stood.
My sweetheart, but his wife, was turned to snow,
As white and cold. I got in readiness
To kill the husband. How could we escape?
I thought the husband had been sent away;
Her coming had been timed with his departure,
Arriving afterward, and we had failed.
But as for that, before our feet could stir,
The officer said, 'Come now, I'll prove your lie,'
And in a twinkling, taking a dozen steps

They turned into the arcade, there they were,
The officer was shaking him and saying,
'You lie! You lie!'

"All happened in a moment,
The humbled, ruined fellow saw the truth,
And blew his brains out on the very spot!
And made a wonder, gossip for you girls —
And here I am."

So Major Petain finished.
Then Elenor Murray said: "Let's watch the sea."
And as they sat in silence, as he turned
To look upon her face, he saw the tears,
Hanging like dew drops on her lashes, drip
And course her cheeks. "My friend, you weep for me,"
The major said at last, "my gratitude
For tears like these." "I weep," said Elenor Murray,
"For you, but for myself. What can I say?
Nothing, my friend, your soul must find its way.
Only this word: I'll go to mass with you,
I'll sit beside you, pray with you, for you,
And do you pray for me."

And then she paused.
The long wash of the sea filled in the silence.
And then she said again, "I'll go with you,
Where we may pray, each for the other pray.
I have a sorrow, too, as deep as yours."

THE CONVENT

Elenor Murray stole away from Nice
Before her furlough ended, tense to see
Something of Italy, and planned to go
To Genoa, explore the ancient town
Of Christopher Columbus, if she might
Elude the regulation, as she did,
In leaving Nice for Italy. But for her
Always the dream, and always the defeat
Of what she dreamed.

She found herself in Florence
And saw the city. But the weariness
Of labor and her illness came again
At intervals, and on such days she lay
And heard the hours toll, wished for death and wept,
Being alone and sorrowful.

On a morning
She rose and looked for galleries, came at last
Into the Via Gino Capponi
And saw a little church and entered in,
And saw amid the darkness of the church
A woman kneeling, knelt beside the woman,
And put her hand upon the woman's forehead
To find that it was wrinkled, strange to say
A scar upon the forehead, like a cross. . , .
Elenor Murray rose and walked away,

THE CONVENT

Sobs gathering in her throat, her body weak,
And reeled against the wall, for so it seemed,
Against which hung thick curtains, velvet, red,
A little grimed and worn. And as she leaned
Against the curtains, clung to them, she felt
A giving, parted them, and found a door,
Pushed on the door which yielded, opened it
And saw a yard before her.

It was walled.
A garden of old urns and ancient growths,
Some flowering plants around the wall.

Before her
And in the garden's center stood a statue,
With outstretched arms, the Virgin without the child.
And suddenly on Elenor Murray came
Great sorrow like a madness, seeing there
The pitying Virgin, stretching arms to her.
And so she ran along the pebbly walk,
Fell fainting at the Virgin's feet and lay
Unconscious in the garden.

When she woke
Two nuns were standing by, and one was dressed
In purest white, and held within her hands
A tray of gold, and on the tray of gold
There was a glass of wine, and in a cup
Some broth of beef, and on a plate of gold
A wafer.

And the other nun was dressed
In purest white, but over her shoulders lay
A cape of blue, blue as the sky of Florence
Above the garden wall.

Then as she saw
The nuns before her, in the interval
Of gathering thought, re-limning life again
From wonder if she had not died, and these
Were guides or ministrants of another world,
The nun with cape of blue to Elenor
Said: "Drink this wine, this broth;" and Elenor
Drank and arose, being lifted up by them,
And taken through the convent door and given
A little room as white and clean as light,
And a bed of snowy linen.

Then they said:
"This is the Convent where we send up prayers,
Prayers for the souls who do not pray for self —
Rest, child, and be at peace; and if there be
Friends you would tell that you are here, then we
Will send the word for you, sleep now and rest."
And listening to their voices Elenor slept.
And when she woke a nurse was at her side,
And food was served her, broths and fruit. Each day
A doctor came to tell her all was well,
And health would soon return.

So for a month
Elenor Murray lay and heard the bells,

And breathed the fragrance of the flowering city
That floated through her window, in the stillness
Of the convent dreamed, and said to self: This place
Is good to die in, who is there to tell
That I am here? There was no one. To them
She gave her name, but said: "Till I am well
Let me remain, and if I die, some place
Must be for me for burial, put me there.
And if I live to go again to France
And join my unit, let me have a writing
That I did not desert, was stricken here
And could not leave. For while I stole away
From Nice to get a glimpse of Italy,
I might have done so in my furlough time,
And not stayed over it." And to Elenor
The nuns said: "We will help you, but for now
Rest and put by anxieties."

On a day
Elenor Murray made confessional.
And to the nuns told bit by bit her life,
Her childhood, schooling, travels, work in the war,
What fate had followed her, what sufferings.
And Sister Mary, she who saw her first,
And held the tray of gold with wine and broth,
Sat often with her, read to her, and said:
" Letters will go ahead of you to clear
Your absence over time — be not afraid,
All will be well."

And so when Elenor Murray
Arose to leave she found all things prepared:
A cab to take her to the train, compartments
Reserved for her from place to place, her fare
And tickets paid for, till at last she came
To Brest and joined her unit, in three days
Looked at the rolling waters as the ship
Drove to America — such a coming home!
To what and whom?

Loveridge Chase returned and brought the letters
To Coroner Merival from New York. That day
The chemical analysis was finished, showed
No ricin and no poison. Elenor Murray
Died how? What were the circumstances? Then
When Coroner Merival broke the seals of wax,
And cut the twine that bound the package, found
The man was Barrett Bays who wrote the letters —
There were a hundred — then he cast about
To lay his hands on Barrett Bays, and found
That Barrett Bays lived in Chicago, taught,
Was a professor, aged some forty years.
Why did this Barrett Bays emerge not, speak,
Come forward? Was it simply to conceal
A passion written in these letters here
For his sake or his wife's? Or was it guilt
For some complicity in Elenor's death?
And on this day the coroner had a letter
From Margery Camp which said: "Where's Barrett
Bays?

Why have you not arrested him? He knows
Something, perhaps about the death of Elenor."
So Coroner Merival sent process forth
To bring in Barrett Bays, *non est inventus.*
He had not visited his place of teaching,
Been seen in haunts accustomed for some days —
Not since the death of Elenor Murray, none
Knew where to find him, and none seemed to know
What lay between this man and Elenor Murray.
This was the more suspicious. Then the *Times*
Made headlines of the letters, published some
Wherein this Barrett Bays had written Elenor:
"You are my hope in life, my morning star,
My love at last, my all." From coast to coast
The word was flashed about this Barrett Bays;
And Mrs. Bays at Martha's Vineyard read,
Turned up her nose, continued on the round
Of gaieties, but to a chum relieved
Her loathing with these words: "Another woman,
He's soiled himself at last."

And Barrett Bays,
Who roughed it in the Adirondacks, hoped
The inquest's end would leave him undisclosed
In Elenor Murray's life, though wracked with fear
About the letters in the vault, some day
To be unearthed, or taken, it might be,
By Margery Camp for uses sinister —
He reading that the letters had been given
To Coroner Merival, and seeing his name

Printed in every sheet, saw no escape
In any nook of earth, returned and walked
In Merival's office: trembling, white as snow.

So Barrett Bays was sworn, before the jury
Sat and replied to questions, said he knew
Elenor Murray in the fall before
She went to France, saw much of her for weeks;
Had written her these letters before she left.
Had followed her in the war, and gone to France,
Had seen her for some days in Paris when
She had a furlough. Had come back and parted
With Elenor Murray, broken with her, found
A cause for crushing out his love for her.
Came back to win forgetfulness, had written
No word to her since leaving Paris — let
Her letters lie unanswered; brought her letters,
And gave them to the coroner. Then he told
Of the day before her death, and how she came
By motor to Chicago with her aunt,
Named Irma Leese, and telephoned him, begged
An hour for talk. " Come meet me by the river,"
She had said. And so went to meet her. Then he told
Why he relented, after he had left her
In Paris with no word beside this one:
" This is the end." Now he was curious
To know what she would say, what could be said
Beyond what she had written — so he went
Out of a curious but hardened heart.

BARRETT BAYS

" I was walking by the river," Barrett said,
" When she arrived. I took her hand, no kiss,
A silence for some minutes as we walked.
Then we began to take up point by point,
For she was concentrated on the hope
Of clearing up all doubtful things that we
Might start anew, clear visioned, perfect friends,
More perfect for mistakes and clouds. Her will
Was passionate beyond all other wills,
And when she set her mind upon a course
She could not be diverted, or if so,
Her failure kept her brooding. What with me
She wanted after what had stunned my faith
I knew not, save she loved me. For in truth
I have no money, and no prospects either
To tempt cupidity."

" Well, first we talked —
You must be patient with me, gentlemen,
You see my nerves — they're weakened — but I'll try
To tell you all — well then — a glass of water —
At first we talked but trifles. Silences
Came on us like great calms between the stir
Of ineffectual breezes, like this day
In August growing sultry as the sun
Rose upward. She was striving to break down
The hard corrosion of my thought, and I

Could not surrender. Till at last, I said;
'That day in Paris when you stood revealed
Can never be forgotten. Once I killed
A love with hatred for a woman who
Betrayed me, as you did. And you can kill
A love with hatred but you kill your soul
While killing love. And so with you I kept
All hatred from my heart, but cannot keep
A poisonous doubt of you from blood and brain.' . . .
I learned in Paris, (to be clear on this),
That after she had given herself to me
She fell back in the arms of Gregory Wenner.
And here as we were walking I revealed
My agony, my anger, emptied out
My heart of all its bitterness. At last
When she protested it was natural
For her to do what she had done, the act
As natural as breathing, taking food,
Not signifying faithlessness nor love —
Though she admitted had she loved me then
She had not done so — I grew tense with rage,
A serpent which grows stiff and rears its head
To strike its enemy was what I seemed
To myself then, and so I said to her
In voice controlled and low, but deadly clear,
'What are you but a whore — you are a whore!'
Murderous words no doubt, but do you hear
She justified herself with Gregory Wenner;
Yes, justified herself when she had written
And asked forgiveness — yes, brought me out

To meet her by the river. And for what?
I said you whore, she shook from head to heels,
And toppled, but I caught her in my arms,
And held her up, she paled, head rolled around,
Her eyes set, mouth fell open, all at once
I saw that she was dead, or syncope
Profound had come upon her. Elenor,
What is the matter? Love came back to me,
Love there with Death. I laid her on the ground.
I found her dead.

"If I had any thought
There in that awful moment, it was this:
To run away, escape, could I maintain
An innocent presence there, be clear of fault?
And if I had that thought, as I believe,
I had no other; all my mind's a blank
Until I find myself at one o'clock
Disrobing in my room, too full of drink,
And trying to remember.

"With the morning
I lay in bed and thought: Did Irma Leese
Know anything of me, or did she know
That Elenor went out to meet a man?
And if she did not know, who could disclose
That I was with her? No one saw us there.
Could I not wait from day to day and see
What turn the news would take? For at the last
I did not kill her. If the inquest showed

Her death was natural, as it was, for all
Of me, why then my secret might be hidden
In Elenor Murray's grave. And if they found
That I was with her, brought me in the court,
I could make clear my innocence. And thus
I watched the papers, gambled with the chance
Of never being known in this affair.
Does this sound like a coward? Put yourself
In my place in that horror. Think of me
With all these psychic shell shocks — first the war,
Its great emotions, then this Elenor."

And thus he spoke and twisted hands, and twitched,
And ended suddenly. Then David Borrow,
And Winthrop Marion with the coroner
Shot questions at him till he woke, regained
A memory, concentration: Who are you?
What was your youth? Your love life? What your
    wife?
Where did you meet this Elenor at the first?
Why did you go to France? In Paris what
Happened to break your balance? Tell us all.
For as they eyed him, he looked down, away,
Stirred restless in the chair. And was it truth
He told of meeting Elenor, her death?
Guilt like a guise was on his face. And one —
This Isaac Newfeldt, juryman, whispered, "Look,
That man is guilty, let us fly the questions
Like arrows at him till we bring him down."

And as they flew the arrows he came to
And spoke as follows: —

"First, I am a heart
That from my youth has sought for love and hungered.
And Elenor Murray's heart had hungered too,
Which drew our hearts together, made our love
As it were mystical, more real. I was
A boy who sought for beauty, hope and faith
In woman's love; at fourteen met a girl
Who carried me to ecstasy till I walked
In dreamland, stepping clouds. She loved me too.
I could not cure my heart, have always felt
A dull pain for that girl. She died, you know.
I found another, rather made myself
Discover my ideal in her, until
My heart was sure she was the one. And then
I woke up from this trance, went to another
Still searching; always searching, reaching now
An early cynicism, how to play with hearts,
Extract their beauty, pass to someone else.
I was a little tired now, seemed to know
There is no wonder woman, just a woman
Somewhere to be a wife. And then I met
The woman whom I married, thought to solve
My problem with the average things of life;
The satisfaction of insistent sex,
A home, a regular program, turn to work,
Forget the dream, the quest. What did I find?
A woman who exhausted me and bored me,

Stirred never a thought, a fancy, brought no friends,
No pleasures or diversions, took from me
All that I had to give of mind and heart,
Purse, or what not. And she was barren too,
And restless; by that restlessness relieved
The boredom of our life; it took her off
In travels here and there. And I was glad
To have her absent, but it still is true
There is a hell in marriage, when it keeps
Delights of freedom off, all other women
Not willing to intrigue, pass distantly
Your married man; but on the other hand
What was my marriage with a wife away
Six months or more of every year? And when
I said to her, divorce me, she would say,
You want your freedom to get married — well,
The other woman shall not have you, if
There is another woman, as I think.
And so the years went by. I'm thirty-five
And meet a woman, play light heartedly,
She is past thirty, understands nor asks
A serious love. It's summer and we jaunt
About the country, for my wife's away.
As usual, in the fall returns, and then
My woman says, the holiday is over,
Go back to work, and I'll go back to work.
I cannot give her up, would still go on
For this delight so sweet to me. By will
I hold her, stir the fire up to inflame
Her hands for me, make love to her in short

And find myself in love, beholding in her
All beauties and all virtues. Well, at first
What did I care what she had been before,
Whose mistress, sweetheart? Now I cared and asked
Fidelity from her, and this she pledged.
And so a settled life seemed come to us,
We had found happiness. But on a day
I caught her in unfaithfulness. A man
She knew before she knew me crossed her path.
Why do they do this, even while their lips
Are wet with kisses given you? I think
A woman may be true in marriage, never
In any free relationship. And then
I left her, killed the love I had with hate.
Hate is an energy with which to save
A heart knocked over by a blow like this.
To forgive this wrong is never to forget,
But always to remember, with increasing
Sorrow and dreams invest the ruined love.
And so I turned to hate, came from the flames
As hard and glittering as crockery ware,
And went my way with gallant gestures, winning
An hour of rapture where it came to me.
And all the time my wife was much away,
Yet left me in this state where I was kept
From serious love if I had found the woman.
A pterodactyl in my life and soul:
Had wings, could fly, but slumbered in the mud.
Was neither bird nor beast; as social being
Was neither bachelor nor married man.

The years went on with work, day after day
Arising to the task, night after night
Returning for the rest with which to rise,
Forever following the mad illusion,
The dream, the expected friend, the great event
Which should change life, and never finding it.
And all the while I see myself consumed,
Sapped somehow by this wife and hating her;
Then fearful for myself for hating her,
Then melting into generosities
For hating her. And so tossed back and forth
Between such passions, also never at peace
From the dream of love, the woman and the mate
I stagger, amble, hurtle through the years,
And reach that summer of two years ago
When life began to change. It was this way:
My wife is home, for a wonder, and my friend,
Most sympathetic, nearest, comes to dine.
He casts his comprehending eyes about,
Takes all things in. As we go down to town,
And afterward at luncheon, when alone
He says to me: she is a worthy woman,
Beautiful, too, there is no other woman
To make you happier, the fault is yours,
At least in part, remove your part of the fault,
To woo her, give yourself, find good in her.
Go take a trip. For neither man nor woman
Yields everything till wooed, tried out, beloved.
Bring all your energies to the trial of her.
She will respond, unfold, repay your work.

He won me with his words. I said to her,
Let's summer at Lake Placid — so we went.
I tried his plan, did all I could, no use.
The woman is not mine, was never mine,
Was meant for someone else. And in despair,
In wrath as well, I left her and came back
And telephoned a woman that I knew
To dine with me. She came, was glad and gay,
But as she drew her gloves off let me see
A solitaire. What, you? I said to her,
You leave me too? She smiled and answered me;
Marriage may be the horror that you think,
And yet we all must try it once, and Charles
Is nearest my ideal of any man.
I have been very ill since last we met,
Had not survived except for skillful hands,
And Charles was good to me, with heart and purse.
My illness took my savings. I repay
His goodness with my hand. I love him too.
You do not care to lose me. As for that
I know one who will more than take my place;
She is the nurse who nursed me back to health,
I'll have you meet her, I can get her now.
She rose and telephoned. In half an hour
Elenor Murray joined us, dined with us.
I watched her as she entered, did not see
A single wonder in her, cannot now
Remember how she looked, what dress she wore,
What hat in point of color, anything.
After the dinner I rode home with them,

Saw Elenor at luncheon next day. So
The intimacy began."

"She was alone,
Unsettled and unhappy, pressed for funds.
She had, it seemed, nursed Janet without pay
Till Charles made good at last the weekly wage;
Since Janet's illness had no work to do.
I was alone and bored, she came to me
Almost at first as woman never came
To me before, so radiant, sympathetic,
Admiring, so devoted with a heart
That soothed and strove to help me. Strange to say
These manifests of spirit, ministrations
Bespoke the woman who has found a man,
And never knew a man before. She seemed
An old maid jubilant for a man at last,
And truth to tell I took her rapturous ways
With just a little reticence, and shrinking
Of spirit lest her hands would touch too close
My spirit which misvalued hers, withdraw
Itself from hers with hidden smiles that she
Could find so much in me. She did not change,
Retreat, draw in; advanced, poured out, gave more
And wooed me, till I feared if I should take
Her body she would follow me, grow mad
And shameless for her love."

"But as for that
That next day while at luncheon, frank and bold,

I spoke right out to her and then she shook
From head to foot, and made her knife in hand
Rattle the plate for trembling, turned as pale
As the table linen. Afterward as we met,
Having begun so, I renewed the word,
Half smiling to behold her so perturbed,
And serious, and gradually toning down
Pursuit of her this way, as I perceived
Her interest growing and her clinging ways,
Her ardor, huddling to me, great devotion;
Rapt words of friendship, offers of herself
For me or mine for nothing were we ill
And needed her."

"These currents flowed along.
Hers plunged and sparkled, mine was slow for thought.
A doubt of her, or fear, till on a night
When nothing had been said of this before,
Quite suddenly when nearing home she shrank,
Involved herself in shrinking in the corner
Of the cab's seat, and spoke up: 'Take me now,
I'm yours to-night, will do what you desire,
Whatever you desire.' I acted then,
Seemed overjoyed, was puzzled just the same,
And almost feared her. As I said before,
I feared she might pursue me, trouble me
After a hold like this,— and yet I said:
'Go get your satchel, meet me in an hour.'
I let her out, drove to the club, and thought;
Then telephoned her, business had come up,

I could not meet her, but would telephone
To-morrow."

"And to-morrow when it came
Brought ridicule and taunting from myself:
To have pursued this woman, for two months,
And if half-heartedly, you've made her think
Your heart was wholly in it, now she yields,
Bestows herself. You fly, you are a fool;
A village pastor playing Don Juan,
A booby costumed as a gallant -- pooh!
Go take your chance. I telephoned her then,
That night she met me."

"Here was my surprise:
All semblance of the old maid fell away,
Like robes as she disrobed. She brought with her
Accoutrements of slippers, caps of lace,
And oriental perfumes languorous.
The hour had been all heaven had I sensed,
Sensed without thinking consciously a play,
Dramatics, acting, like an old maid who
Resorts to tricks of dress she fancies wins
A gallant of experience, fancies only
And knows not, being fancied so appears
Half ludicrous."

"But so our woe began.
That morning we had breakfast in our room,
And I was thinking, in an absent way

Responded to her laughter, joyous ways.
For I was thinking of my life again,
Of love that still eluded me, was bored
Because I sat there, did not have the spirit
To share her buoyancy — or was it such?
Did she not ripple merriment to hide
Her disappointment, wake me if she could?
And spite of what I thought of her before
That she had known another man or men,
I thought now I was first. And to let down,
Slope off the event, our parting for the day
Have no abruptness, I invited her
To luncheon, when I left her 'twas to meet
Again at noon. We met and parted then.
So now it seemed a thing achieved. Two weeks
Elapsed before I telephoned her. Then
The story we repeated as before,
Same room and all. But meantime we had sat
Some moments over tea, the orchestra
Played Chopin for her."

"Then she handed me
A little box, I opened it and found
A locket too ornate, her picture in it,
A little flag."

"So in that moment there
Love came to me for Elenor Murray. Music,
That poor pathetic locket, and her way
So humble, so devoted, and the thought

Of those months past, wherein she never swerved
From ways of love, in spite of all my moods,
Half-hearted, distant — these combined at once,
And with a flame that rose up silently
Consumed my heart with love."

"She went away,
And left me hungering, lonely. She returned,
And saw at last dubieties no more,
The answering light for her within my eyes."

"I must recur a little here to say
That at the first, first meeting it may be,
With Janet, there at tea, she said to me
She had signed for the war, would go to France,
To nurse the soldiers. You cannot remember
What people say at first, before you know,
Have interest in them. Also at that time
I had no interest in the war, believed
The war would end before we took a hand.
The war lay out of me, objectified
Like news of earthquakes in Japan. And then
As time went on she said: 'I do not know
What day I shall be called, the time's at hand.'
I loathed the Germans then; but loathed the war,
The hatred, lying, which it bred, the filth
Spewed over Europe, from the war, on us
At last. I loathed it all, and saw
The spirit of the world debauched and fouled
With blood and falsehood."

"Elenor found in me
Cold water for her zeal, and even asked:
'Are you pro-German? — no!' I tried to say
What stirred in me, she did not comprehend,
And went her way with saying: 'I shall serve,
O, glorious privilege to serve, to give,
And since this love of ours is tragedy,
Cannot be blessed with children, or with home,
It will be better if I die, am swept
Under the tide of war with work.' This girl
Exhausted me with ardors, spoken faiths,
And zeal which never tired, until at last
I longed for her to go and make an end.
What better way to end it?"

"April came,
One day she telephoned me that to-morrow
She left for France. We met that night and walked
A wind swept boulevard by the lake, and she
Was luminous, a spirit; tucked herself
Under my coat, adored me, said to me:
'If I survive I shall return to you,
To serve you, help you, be your friend for life,
And sacrifice my womanhood for you.
You cannot marry me, in spite of that
If I can be your comfort, give you peace,
That will be marriage, all that God intends
As marriage for me. You have blessed me, dear,
With hope and happiness. And oh at last
You did behold the war as good, you give me,

You send me to the war. I serve for you,
I serve the country in your name, your love,
So blessed for you, your love.' "

"That night at two
I woke somehow as if an angel stood
Beside the bed in light, beneficence,
And found her head close to my heart — she woke
At once with me, spoke dreamily 'Dear heart,'
Then turned to sleep again. I loved her then."

"She left next day. An olden mood came back
Which said, the end has come, and it is best.
I left the city too, breathed freer then,
Sought new companionships. But in three days
My heart was sinking, sickness of the heart,
Nostalgia took me. How to fight it off
Became the daily problem; work, diversions
Seemed best for cures. The malady progressed
Beyond the remedies. My wife came back,
Divined my trouble, laughed. And every day
The papers pounded nerves with battle news;
The bands were playing, soldiers marched the streets.
And taggers on the corner every day
Reminded you of suffering and of want.
And orators were talking where you ate:
Bonds must be bought — war — war was everywhere.
There was no place remote to hide from it,
And rest from its insistence. Then began
Elenor Murray's letters sent from France,

Which told of what she did, and always said:
'Would you were with me, serving in the war.
If you could come and serve; they need you, dear;
You could do much.' Until at last the war
Which had lain out of me, objectified,
Became a part of me, I saw the war,
And felt the war through her, and every tune
And every marching soldier, every word
Spoken by orators said Elenor Murray.
At dining places, theatres, pursued
By this one thought of war and Elenor Murray;
In every drawing room pursued, pursued
In quiet places by the memories.
I had no rest. The war and love of her
Had taken body of me, soul of me,
With madness, ecstasy, and nameless longing,
Hunger and hope, fear and despair — but love
For Elenor Murray with intenser flame
Ran round it all."

"At last all other things:
Place in the world, my business, and my home,
My wife if she be counted, sunk away
To nothingness. I stood stripped of the past,
Saw nothing but the war and Elenor,
Saw nothing but the day of finding her
In France, and serving there to be with her,
Or near where I could see her, go to her,
Perhaps if she was ill or needed me.
And so I went to France, began to serve,

Went in the ordnance. In that ecstasy
Of war, religion, love, found happiness;
Became a part of the event, and cured
My languors, boredom, longing, in the work;
And saw the war as greatest good, the hand
Of God through all of it to bring the world
Beauty and Freedom, a millennium
Of Peace and Justice."

"So the days went by
With work and waiting, waiting for the hour
When Elenor should have a furlough, come
To Paris, see me. And she came at last."

"Before she came she wrote me, told me where
To meet her first. 'At two o'clock,' she wrote,
'Be on the landing back of the piano'
Of a hotel she named. An ominous thought
Passed through my brain, as through a room a bat
Flits in and out. I read the letter over:
How could this letter pass the censor? Escape
The censor's eye? But eagerness of passion,
And longing, love, submerged such thoughts as these.
I walked the streets and waited, loitered through
The Garden of the Tuilleries, watched the clocks,
The lagging minutes, counted with their strokes.
And then at last the longed for hour arrived.
I reached the landing — what a meeting place!
With pillars, curtains hiding us, a nook
No one could see us in, unless he spied.

And she was here, was standing by the corner
Of the piano, very pale and worn,
Looked down, not at me, pathos over her
Like autumn light. I took her in my arms,
She could not speak, it seemed. I could not speak.
Dumb sobs filled heart and throat of us. And then
I held her from me, looked at her, re-clasped
Her head against my breast, with choking breath
That was half whisper, half a cry, I said,
'I love you, love you, now at last we're here
Together, oh, my love!' She put her lips
Against my throat and kissed it: 'Oh, my love,
You really love me, now I know and see,
My soul, my dear one,' Elenor breathed up
The words against my throat."

"We took a suite:
Soft rugs upon the floor, a bed built up,
And canopied with satin, on the wall
Some battle pictures, one of Bonaparte,
A bottle of crystal water on a stand
And roses in a bowl — the room was sweet
With odors, and so comfortable. Here we stood.
'It's Paris, dear,' she said, 'we are together;
You're serving in the war, how glorious!
We love each other, life is good — so good!'
That afternoon we saw the city a little,
So many things occurred to prophesy,
Interpret."

"And that night we saw the moon,
One star above the Arc de Triomphe, over
The chariot of bronze and leaping horses.
Dined merrily and slept and woke together
Beneath that satin canopy."

"In brief,
The days went by with laughter and with love.
We watched the Seine from bridges, in a spell
There at Versailles in the Temple of Love
Sat in the fading day."

"Upon the lawn
She took her diary from her bag and read
What she had done in France; years past as well.
Began to tell me of a Simeon Strong
Whom she was pledged to marry years before.
How jealousy of Simeon Strong destroyed
His love, and all because in innocence
She had received some roses from a friend.
That led to other men that she had known
Who wished to marry her, as she said. But most
She talked of Simeon Strong; then of a man
Who had absorbed her life until she went
In training as a nurse, a married man,
Whom she had put away, himself forgetting
A hopeless love he crushed. Until at last
I said, no more, my dear — The past is dead,
What is the past to me? It could not be
That you could live and never meet a man

To love you, whom you loved. And then at last
She put the diary in her bag, we walked
And scanned the village from the heights; the train
Took back for Paris, went to dine, be gay.
This afternoon was the last, this night the last.
To-morrow she was going back to work,
And I was to resume my duties too,
Both hopeful for another meeting soon,
The war's end, a re-union, some solution
Of what was now a problem hard to bear."

"We left our dinner early, she was tired,
There in our room again we clung together,
Grieved for the morrow. Sadness fell upon us,
Her eyes were veiled, her voice was low, her speech
Was brief and nebulous. She soon disrobed,
Lay with her hair spread out upon the pillow,
One hand above the coverlet."

"And soon
Was lying with head turned from me. I sat
And read to man my grief. You see the war
Blew to intenser flame all moods, all love,
All grief at parting, fear, or doubt. At last
As I looked up to see her I could see
Her breast with sleep arise and fall. The silence
Of night was on the city, even her breath
I heard as she was sleeping — for myself
I wondered what I was and why I was,
What world is this and why, and if there be

God who creates us to this life, then why
This agony of living, peace or war;
This agony which grows greater, never less,
And multiplies its sources with the days,
Increases its perplexities with time,
And gives the soul no rest. And why this love,
This woman in my life. The mystery
Of my own torture asked to be explained.
And why I married whom I married, why
She was content to stand far off and watch
My crucifixion. Why?"

"And with these thoughts
Came thought of changing them. A wonder slipped
About her diary in my brain. I paused,
Said to myself, you have no right to spy
Upon such secret records, yet indeed
A devilish sense of curiosity
Came as relaxment to my graver mood,
As one will fetch up laughter to dispel
Thoughts that cannot be quelled or made to take
The form of action, clarity. I arose
Took from her bag the diary, turned to see
What entry she had made when first she came
And gave herself to me. And look! The page
Just opposite from this had words to show
She gave herself to Gregory Wenner just
The week that followed on the week in which
She gave herself to me."

"A glass of water,
Before I can proceed!" . . .

"I reeled and struck
The bed post. She awoke. I thought that death
Had come with apoplexy, could not see,
And in a spell vertiginous, with hands
That shook and could not find the post, stood there
Palsied from head to foot. Quick, she divined
The event, the horror anyway, sprang out,
And saw the diary lying at my feet.
Before I gained control of self, could catch
Or hold her hands, she seized it, threw it out
The window on the street, and flung herself
Face down upon the bed."

"Oh awful hell!
What other entries did I miss, what shames
Recorded since she left me, here in France?
What was she then? A woman of one sin,
Or many sins, her life filled up with treason,
Since I had left her?"

"And now think of me:
This monstrous war had entered me through her,
Its passion, beauty, promise came through her
Into my blood and spirit, swept me forth
From country, life I knew, all settled things.
I had gone mad through her, and from her lips
Had caught the poison of the war, its hate,

Its yellow sentiment, its sickly dreams,
Its lying ideals, and its gilded filth.
And here she lay before me, like a snake
That having struck, by instinct now is limp;
By instinct knows its fangs have done their work,
And merely lies and rests."

"I went to her,
Pulled down her hands from eyes and shook her hard:
What is this? Tell me all?"

"She only said:
'You have seen all, know all.'"

"'You do not mean
That was the first and last with him?' She said,
'That is the truth.' 'You lie,' I answered her.
'You lie and all your course has been a lie:
Your words that asked me to be true to you,
That I could break your heart. The breasts you showed
Flowering because of me, as you declared;
Our intimacy of bodies in the dance
Now first permitted you because of love;
Your plaints for truth and for fidelity,
Your fears, a practiced veteran in the game,
All simulated. And your prayer to God
For me, our love, your protests for the war,
For service, sacrifice, your mother hunger,
Are all elaborate lies, hypocrisies,
Studied in coolest cruelty, and mockery

Of every lovely thing, if there can be
A holy thing in life, as there cannot,
As you have proven it. The diary's gone —
And let it go — you kept it from my eyes
Which shows that there was more. What are you then,
A whore, that's all, a masquerading whore,
Not worthy of the hand that plies her trade
In openness, without deceit. For if
This was the first and only time with him
Here is dissimulation month by month
By word of mouth, in letters by the score;
And here your willingness to take my soul
And feed upon it. Knowing that my soul
Through what I thought was love was caught and whirled
To faith in the war, and faith in you as one
Who symbolized the war as good, as means
Of goodness for the world — and this deceit,
Insane, remorseless, conscienceless, is worse
Than what you did with him. I could forgive
Disloyalty like that, but this deceit
Is unforgivable. I go,' I said.
I turned to leave. She rose up from the bed,
'Forgive! Forgive!' she pleaded, 'I was mad,
Be fair! Be fair! You took me, turned from me,
Seemed not to want me, so I went to him.
I cried the whole day long when first I gave
Myself to you, for thinking you had found
All that you wanted, left me, did not care
To see me any more. I swear to you
I have been faithful to you since that day

When we heard Chopin played, and I could see
You loved me, and I loved you. O be fair!'" . . .

Then Barrett Bays shook like an animal
That starves and freezes. And the jury looked
And waited till he got control of self
And spoke again his horror and his grief:—
"I left her, went upon the silent streets,
And walked the night through half insane, I think.
Cannot remember what I saw that night,
Have only blurs of buildings, arches, towers,
Remember dawn at last, returning strength,
And taking rolls and coffee, all my spirit
Grown clear and hard as crystal, with a will
As sharp as steel to find reality:
To see life as it is and face its terrors,
And never feel a tremor, bat an eye.
Drink any cup to find the truth, and be
A pioneer in a world made new again,
Stripped of the husks, bring new faith to the world,
Of souls devoted to themselves to make
Souls truer, more developed, wise and fair!
Write down the creed of service, and write in
Self-culture, self-dependence, throw away
The testaments of Jesus, old and new,
Save as they speak and help the river life
To mould our truer beings; the rest discard
Which teaches compensation, to forgive
That you may be forgiven, mercy show
That mercy may be yours, and love your neighbor,

Love so to gain — all balances like this
Of doctrine for the spirit false and vile,
Corrupted with such calculating filth;
And if you'd be the greatest, be the servant —
When one to be the greatest must be great
In self, a light, a harmony in self,
Perfected by the inner law, the works
Done for the sake of beauty, for the self
Without the hope of gain except the soul,
Your one possession, grows a perfect thing
If tended, studied, disciplined. While all
This ethic of the war, the sickly creed
Which Elenor Murray mouthed, but hides the will
Which struggles still, would live, lies to itself,
Lies to its neighbor and the world, and leaves
Our life upon a wall of rotting rock
Of village mortals, patriotism, lies!"

"And as for that, what did I see in Paris
But human nature working in the war
As everywhere it works in peace? Cabals,
And jealousies and hatreds, greed alert;
Ambition, cruelty, strife piled on strife;
No peace in labor that was done for peace;
Hypocrisy elaborate and rampant.
Saw at first hand what coiled about the breast
Of Florence Nightingale when she suffered, strove
In the Crimean War, struck down by envy,
Or nearly so. Oh, is it human nature,
That fights like maggots in the rotting carcass?

Or is it human nature tortured, bound
By artificial doctrines, creeds which all
Pretend belief in, really doubt, resist
And cannot live by?"

"If I had a thought
Of charity toward this woman then
It was that she, a little mind, had tried
To live the faith against her nature, used
A woman's cunning to get on in life.
For as I said it was her lies that hurt.
And had she lied, had she been living free,
Unshackled of our system, faith and cult,
American or Christian, what you will?

"She was a woman free or bound, but women
Enslave and rule by sex. The female tigers
Howl in the jungle when their dugs are dry
For meat to suckle cubs. And Germany
Of bullet heads and bristling pompadours,
And wives made humble, cowed by basso brutes,
Had women to enslave the brutes with sex,
And make them seek possessions, land and food
For breeding women and for broods."

"And now
If women make the wars, yet nurse the sick,
The wounded in the wars, when peace results,
What peace will be, except a peace that fools
The gaping idealist, all souls in truth

But souls like mine? A peace that leaves the world
Just where it was with women in command
Who, weak but cunning, clinging to the faith
Of Christ, therefore as organized and made
A part, if not the whole of western culture.
Away with all of this! Blow down the mists,
The rainbows, give us air and cloudless skies.
Give water to our fevered eyes, give strength
To see what is and live it, tear away
These clumsy scaffoldings, by which the mystics,
Ascetics, mad-men all St. Stylites
Would rise above the world of body, brain,
Thirst, hunger, living, nature! Let us free
The soul of man from sophists, logic spinners,
The mad-magicians who would conjure death,
Yet fear him most themselves, the coward hearts
Who mouth eternal bliss, yet cling to earth
And keep away from heaven."

"For it's true
Nature, or God, gives birth and also death.
And power has never come to draw the sting
Of death or make it pleasant, creed nor faith
Prevents disease, old age and death at last.
This truth is here and we must face it, or
Lie to ourselves and cloud our brains with lies,
Postponements and illusions, childish hopes!
But lie most childish is the Christian myth
Of Adam's fall, by which disease and death
Entered the world, until the Savior came

And conquered death. He did? But people die,
Some millions slaughtered in the war! They live
In heaven, say your Elenor Murrays, well,
Who knows this? If you know it, why drop tears
For people better off? How ludicrous
The patch-work is! I leave it, turn again
To what man in this world can do with life
Made free of superstition, rules and faiths,
That make him lie to self and to his fellows." . . .

And Barrett Bays, now warmed up to his work,
Grown calmer, stronger, mind returned, that found
Full courage for the thought, the word to say it
Recurred to Elenor Murray, analyzed: —
And now a final word: "This Elenor Murray,
What was she, just a woman, a little life
Swept in the war and broken? If no more,
She is not worth these words: She is the symbol
Of our America, perhaps this world
This side of India, of America
At least she is the symbol. What was she?
A restlessness, a hunger, and a zeal;
A hope for goodness, and a tenderness;
A love, a sorrow, and a venturing will;
A dreamer fooled but dreaming still, a vision
That followed lures that fled her, generous, loving,
But also avid and insatiable;
An egoism chained and starved too long
That breaks away and runs; a cruelty,
A wilfulness, a dealer in false weights,

And measures of herself, her duty, others,
A lust, a slick hypocrisy and a faith
Faithless and hollow. But at last I say
She taught me, saved me for myself, and turned
My steps upon the path of making self
As much as I can make myself — my thanks
To Elenor Murray!"

"For that day I saw
The war for what it was, and saw myself
An artificial factor, working there
Because of Elenor Murray — what a fool!
I was not really needed, like too many
Was just pretending, though I did not know
That I was just pretending, saw myself
Swept in this mad procession by a woman;
And through myself I saw the howling mob
Back in America that shouted hate,
In God's name, all the carriers of flags,
The superheated patriots who did nothing,
Gave nothing but the clapping of their hands,
And shouts for freedom of the seas. The souls
Who hated freedom on the sea or earth,
Had, as the vile majority, set up
Intolerable tyrannies in America,
America that launched herself without
A God or faith, but in the name of man
And for humanity, so long accursed
By Gods and priests — the vile majority!
Which in the war, and through the war went on

With other tyrannies as to meat and drink,
Thought, speech, the mind in living — here was I
One of the vile majority through a woman —
And serving in the war because of her,
And meretricious sentiments of her.
You see I had the madness of the world,
Was just as crazy as America.
And like America must wake from madness
And suffer, and regret, and build again.
My soul was soiled, you see. And now I saw
How she had pressed her lips against my soul
And sapped my spirit in the name of beauty
She simulated; for a loyalty
Her lips averred; how as a courtesan
She had made soft my tissues, like an apple
Handled too much; how vision of me went
Into her life sucked forth; how never a word
Which ever came from her interpreted
In terms of worth the war; how she had coiled
Her serpent loins about me; how she draped
Herself in ardors borrowed; how my arms
Were mottled from the needle's scar where she
Had shot the opiates of her lying soul;
How asking truth, she was herself untrue;
How she, adventuress in the war, had sought
From lust grown stale, renewal of herself.
And then at last I saw her scullery brows
Fail out and fade beside the Republic's face,
And leave me free upon the hills, who saw,
Strong, seeking cleanliness in truth, her hand

Which sought the cup worn smooth by leper lips
Dipped in the fountain where the thirst of many
Passionate pilgrims had been quenched,
Not lifted up by me, nor yet befriended
By the cleaner cup I offered. Now you think
That I am hard. Philosophy is hard,
And I philosophize, admit as well
That I have failed, am full of faults myself,
All faults, we'll say, but one, I trust and pray
The fault of falsehood and hypocrisy." . . .

" I gave my work in Paris up — that day
Made ready to return, but with this thought
To use my wisdom for the war, do work
For America that had no touch of her,
No flavor of her nature, far removed
From the symphony of sex, be masculine,
Alone, and self-sufficient, needing nothing,
No hand, no kiss, no mate, pure thought alone
Directed to this work. I found the work
And gave it all my energy."

" From then
I wrote her nothing, though she wrote to me
These more than hundred letters — here they are!
Since you have mine brought to you from New York
All written before she went to France, I think
You should have hers to make the woman out
And read her as she wrote herself to me.

The rest is brief. She cabled when she sailed,
And wrote me from New York. While at LeRoy
With Irma Leese she wrote me. Then that day
She telephoned me when she motored here
With Irma Leese, and said: 'Forgive, forgive,
O see me, come to me, or let me come
To you, you cannot crush me out. These months
Of silence, what are they? Eternity
Makes nothing of these months. I love you, never
In all eternity shall cease to love you,
Love makes you mine, and you must come to me
Now or hereafter.' "

"And you see at last
My soul was clear again, as clean and cold
As our March days, as clear too, and the war
Stood off envisioned for the thing it was.
Peace now had come, which helped our eyes to see
What dread event the war was. So to see
This woman with these eyes of mine, made true
And unpersuadable of her plaints and ways
I gave consent and went."

"Arriving first,
I walked along the river till she came.
And as I saw her, I looked through the tricks
Of dress she played to win me, I could see
How she arrayed herself before the mirror,
Adjusting this or that to make herself
Victorious in the meeting. But my eyes

Were wizard eyes for her, and this she knew,
Began at first to writhe, change color, flap
Her nervous hands in gestures half controlled.
I only said, 'Good morning,' took her hand,
She tried to kiss me, but I drew away.
'I have been true,' she said, 'I love you, dear,
If I was false and did not love you, why
Would I pursue you, write you, all against
Your coldness and your silence? O believe me,
The war and you have changed me. I have served,
Served hard among the sufferers in the war,
Sustained by love for you. I come to you
And give my life to you, take it and use,
Keep me your secret joy. I do not dream
Of winning you in marriage. Here and now
I humble self to you, ask nothing of you,
Except your kindness, love again, if love
Can come again to you — O this must be!
It is my due who love you, with my soul,
My body.' "

"'No,' I said, 'I can forgive
All things but lying and hypocrisy.' . . .
How could I trust her? She had kept from me
The diary, threw it from the window, what
Was life of her in France? Should I expunge
This Gregory Wenner, what was life of her
In France, I ask. And so I said to her:
'I have no confidence in you'— O well
I told the jury all. But quick at once

She showed to me, that if I could forgive
Her course of lying, she was changed to me,
The war had changed her, she was hard and wild,
Schooled in the ways of soldiers, and in war.
That beauty of her womanhood was gone,
Transmuted into waywardness, distaste
For simple ways, for quiet, loveliness.
The adventuress in her was magnified,
Cleared up and set, she had become a shrike,
A spar hawk, and I loathed her for these ways
Which she revealed, dropping her gentleness
When it had failed her. Yes, I saw in her
The war at last; its lying and its hate,
Its special pleading, and its double dealing,
Its lust, its greed, its covert purposes,
Its passion out of hell which obelised
Such noble things in man. Its crooked uses
Of lofty spirits, flaming fires of youth,
Young dreamers, lovers. And at last she said,
As I have told the jury, what she did
Was natural, and I cursed her. Then she shook,
Turned pale, and reeled, I caught her, held her up,
She died right in my arms! And this is all;
Except that had I killed her and should spend
My days in prison for it, I am free,
My spirit being free."

"Who was this woman?
This Elenor Murray was America;
Corrupt, deceived, deceiving, self-deceived,

Half-disciplined, half-lettered, crude and smart,
Enslaved yet wanting freedom, brave and coarse,
Cowardly, shabby, hypocritical,
Generous, loving, noble, full of prayer,
Scorning, embracing rituals, recreant
To Christ so much professed; adventuresome;
Curious, mediocre, venal, hungry
For money, place, experience, restless, no
Repose, restraint; before the world made up
To act and sport ideals, go abroad
To bring the world its freedom, having choked
Freedom at home — the girl was this because
These things were bred in her, she breathed them in
Here where she lived and grew."

Then Barrett Bays stepped down
And said, "If this is all, I'd like to go."
Then David Borrow whispered in the ear
Of Merival, and Merival conferred
With Ritter and Llewellyn George and said:
"We may need you again, a deputy
Will take you to my house, and for the time
Keep you in custody."

The deputy
Came in and led him from the jury room.

ELENOR MURRAY

Coroner Merival took the hundred letters
Which Elenor Murray wrote to Barrett Bays,
Found some of them unopened, as he said,
And read them to the jury. Day by day
She made a record of her life, and wrote
Her life out hour by hour, that he might know.
The hundredth letter was the last she wrote.
And this the Coroner found unopened, cut
The envelope and read it in these words:

"You see I am at Nice. If you have read
The other letters that I wrote you since
Our parting there in Paris, you will know
About my illness; but I write you now
Some other details."

"I went back to work
So troubled and depressed about you, dear,
About myself as well. I thought of you,
Your suffering and doubt, perhaps your hate.
And since you do not write me, not a line
Have written since we parted, it may be
Hatred has entered you to make distrust
Less hard to bear. But in no waking hour,
And in no hour of sleep when I have dreamed,
Have you been from my mind. I love you, dear,
Shall always love you, all eternity

Cannot exhaust my love, no change shall come
To change my love. And yet to love you so,
And have no recompense but silence, thoughts
Of your contempt for me, make exquisite
The suffering of my spirit. Could I sing
My sorrow would enchant the world, or write,
I might regain your love with beauty born
Out of this agony."

"When I returned
I had three typhoid cases given me.
And with that passion which you see in me
I gave myself to save them, took this love
Which fills my heart for you and nursed them with it;
Said to myself to keep me on my feet
When I was staggering from fatigue, 'Give now
Out of this love, it may be God's own gift
With which you may restore these boys to health.
What matter if he love you not.' And so
For twelve hours day by day I waged with death
A slowly winning battle."

"As they rallied,
But when my strength was almost spent — what comes?
This Miriam Fay writes odiously to me.
She has heard something of our love, or sensed
Some dereliction, since she learned that I
Had not been to confessional. Anyway
She writes me, writes our head-nurse. All at once
A cloud of vile suspicion, like a dust

Blown from an alley takes my breath away,
And blinds my eyes. With all these things piled up,
My labors and my sorrow, your neglect,
My fears of a dishonorable discharge
From service, which I love, I faint, collapse,
Have streptococcus of the throat, and lie
Two weeks in fever, sleepless, and with thoughts
Of you, and what may happen, my disgrace.
But suffering brought me friends, the officers
Perhaps had heard the scandal, but they knew
My heart was in the work. The major who
Was the attending doctor of these boys
I broke myself with nursing, cared for me,
And cheered me with his praise. And so it was
Your little soldier, still I call myself,
Your little soldier, though you own me not,
Turned failure into victory, won by pain
Befriending hands. The major kept me here
And intercepted my discharge, procured
My furlough here in Nice."

"I rose from bed,
Went back to work, in nine days failed again,
This time with influenza; for three weeks
Was ill enough to die, for all the while
My fever raged, my heart was hurting too,
Because of you. When I got up again
I looked a ghost, was weaker than a child,
At last came here to Nice."

This is the hundredth
Letter that I've written since we parted.
My heart is tired, dear, I shall write no more.
You shall have silence for your silence, yet
When I am silent, trust me none the less,
Believe I love you. If you say that I
Have hidden secrets, have not told you all,
The diary flung away to keep my life
Beyond your eye's inspection, still I say
Where is your right to know what lips I've kissed,
What hopes or dreams I cherished in the past
Before I knew you. If you still accuse
My spirit of deceit, hypocrisy
In lifting up my flower of love to you
Fresh, as it seemed, with morning dew, not tears,
I have my own defense for that, you'll see.
Or lastly, if your love is turned to gall
Because, as you discovered, body of love
Was given to Gregory Wenner, after you
Had come to me in love and chosen me
As servant of you in the war, I write
To clear myself to you respecting that,
And re-insist 'twas body of love alone,
Not love I gave, and what I gave was given
Because you won me, left me, did not claim
As wholly yours what you had won. But now,
As I have hope of life beyond the grave,
As I love God, though serving Him but ill,
I say to you, I have been wholly yours
In spirit and in body since the day

I gave to you the locket, sat with you
And heard the waltz of Chopin, six days after
I went with Gregory Wenner. I explain
Why I did this, shall mention it no more;
You must be satisfied or go your way
In bitterness and hatred."

"But first, my love,
As spirits equal and with equal rights,
Or privilege of equal wrongs, have I
Demanded former purity of you?
I have repelled revealments of your past;
Have never questioned of your marriage, asked,
Which might be juster, rights withdrawn from her;
May rightly think, since you and she have life
In one abode together, that you live
As marriage warrants. And above it all
Have I not written you to go your way,
Find pleasures where you could, have only begged
That you keep out of love, continue to give
Your love to me? And why? Be cynical,
And think I gave you freedom as a gallant
That I might with a quiet conscience take
Such freedom for myself. It is not true:
I've learned the human body, know the male,
And know his life is motile, does not rest,
And wait, as woman's does, cannot do so.
So understanding have put down distaste,
That you should fare in freedom, in my heart
Have wished that love or ideals might sustain

Your spirit; but if not, my heart is filled
With happiness, if you love me. Take these thoughts
And with them solve your sorrow for my past,
Your loathing of it, if you feel that way
However bad it be, whatever sins
Imagination in you stirred depicts
As being in my past."

"Men have been known
Whom women made fifth husbands, more than that.
Not my case, I'll say that, and if you face
Reality, and put all passion love
Where nature puts it by the side of love
Which custom favors, you have only left
The matter of the truth to grasp, believe,
See clearly and accept: Do I swear true
I love you, and since loving you am faithful,
Cannot be otherwise, nor wish to be?"

"Dear, listen and be fair. You did not love me
When first I came to you. You did not ask,
Because of love, a faithfulness; in truth
You did not ask a faithfulness at all.
But then and theretofore you treated me
As woman to be won, a happiness
To be achieved and put aside. Be fair,
This was your mood. But if you loved me then,
Or soon thereafter loved me, as I know,
What should I do? I loved you, am a woman.
At last behold your love, am lifted, thrilled.

See what I thought was love before was nothing;
Know I was never loved before you loved me;
And know as well I never loved before;
Know all the former raptures of my heart
As buds in March closed hard and scentless, never
The June before for my heart! O, my love,
What should I do when this most priceless gift
Was held up like a crown within your hands
To place upon my brows — what should I do?
Take you aside and say, here is the truth,
Here's Gregory Wenner — what's the good of that?
How had it benefited you or me,
Increased your love, or founded it upon
A surer rock than beauty? Hideous truth!
Useless too often, childish in such case.
You would have suffered, turned from me, and lost
The rapture which I gave you, and if rapture
Be not a prize, where in this world so much
Of ugliness and agony prevails,
I do not know our life."

"But just suppose
I gave you rapture, beauty — you concede
I gave you these, that's why you suffer so:
You choose to think them spurious since you found
I knew this Gregory Wenner, are they so?
They are as real in spite of Gregory Wenner
As if my lips had been a cradled child's.
But just suppose, as I began to say,
You never had discovered Gregory Wenner,

And had the rapture, beauty which you had,
How stands the case? Was I not justified
In hiding Gregory Wenner to preserve
The beauty and the rapture which you craved?
Dear, it was love of beauty which impelled
What you have called deceit, it was my woman's
Passionate hope to give the man she loved
The beauty which he saw in her that inspired
My acting, as you phrase it, an elaborate
Hypocrisy, an ugly word from you! . . .
But listen, dear, how spirit works in love:
When you beheld me pure, I would be pure;
As virginal, I would be virginal;
As innocent, I would be innocent;
As truthful, constant, so I would be these
Though to be truthful, constant when I loved you
Came to me like my breath, as natural.
So I would be all things to you for love,
Fill full your dreams, your vision of my soul
For now and future days, but make myself
In days before I knew you what you thought,
Believed and cherished. Hence if you combine
The thought that what I was did not concern you,
With fear that if you knew, your heart would change;
And with these join that passionate zeal of love
To be your lover, wholly beautiful,
You have the exposition of my soul
In its elaborate deceit,— your words."

"Some fifty years ago a man and woman

Are talking in a room, say certain things,
We were not there! We two are with each other
Somewhere, and fifty years from now, we two
Will look to after souls who were not there
Like figures in a crystal globe; I mean
To lift to light the wounds of brooding love,
And show you that the world contains events
Of which we live in ignorance, if we know
They hurt us with their mystery, coming near
In our soul's cycle, somehow. But the dead,
And what they lived, what are they? — what the things
Of our dead selves to selves who are alive,
And live the hour that's given us?"

"What's your past
To me, beloved, if your soul and body
Are mine to-day, not only mine, but made
By living more my own, more rich for me,
More truly harmonized with me? Believe me
You are my highest hope made real at last,
The climax of my love life, I accept
Whatever passed in rooms in years gone by;
Whatever contacts, raptures, pains or hopes
As schooling of your soul to make it precious,
And for my worship, my advancement, kneel
And thank the God of mysteries and wisdom
Who made you for me, let me find you, love you!"

"Now of myself a word. In years to come
These words I write will seem all truth to you,

Their prism colors, violet and red,
Will fade away and leave them in the light
Arranged and reasonable and wholly true.
Then you will read the words: I found you, dear,
After a life of pain; and you will see
My spirit like a blossom that you watch
From budding to unfolding, knowing thus
How it matured from day to day. I say
My life has been all pain, I see at first
A father and a mother linked in strife.
Am thrown upon my girlhood's strength to teach,
Earn money for my schooling, would know French;
I studied Greek a little, gave it up,
Distractions, duties, came too fast for me.
I longed to sing, took lessons, lack of money
Ended the lessons. But above it all
My heart was like an altar lit with flame,
Aspired to heaven, asked for sacrifice,
For incense to be bright, more beautiful
For beauty's sake. And in my soul's despair,
And just to use this vital flame, I turned
To God, the church. You must be stone to hear
Such words as these and not relent, an image
Of basalt which I pray to not to see
And not to hear! But listen! look at me,
Did I become a drifter, wholly fail?
Did I become a common woman, turn
To common life and ways? Can you dispute
My eyes were fixed upon a lovelier life,
Have never gaze withdrawn from loveliness?

Did I give up, or break, turn to the flesh,
Pleasures, the solace of the senses — No!
Where some take drink to ease their hurts and dull
Their disappointments, I renewed my will
To sacrifice and service, work, who saw
These things in essence may be drink as well,
And bring the end, oblivion while you live,
But bring supremacy instead of failure,
Collapse, disgust and fears. Think what you will
Of me for Gregory Wenner, and imagine
The worst you may, I stand here as I am,
With my life proven! And to end the pain
I went to nurse the soldiers in the war
With thoughts that if I died in service, good!
Not that I gladly give up life, I love it.
But life must be surrendered; let it be
In service, as some end it up in drink,
Or opium or lust. Beloved heart,
I know my will is stronger than my vision,
That passion masters judgment; that my love
For love and life and beauty are too much
For gifts like mine; I know that I am dumb,
Songless, without articulate words — but still
My very dumbness is a kind of speech
Which some day will flood down your deafened rocks,
And sweep my meaning over you."

"Well, now
Why did I turn to Gregory from you?
I did not love you or I had not done it.

You did not love me or I had not done it.
I loved him once, he had been good to me.
He was an old familiar friend and touch. . . .
Farewell, if it must be, but save me grief,
The greatest agony: Be brave and strong,
Be all that God requires your soul to be,
O, give me not this cup of poison — this:
That I have been your cause of bitterness;
Have stopped your growth and introverted you,
Given you eyes that see but lies and lust
In human nature, evil in the world —
Eyes that God meant to see the good and strive
For goodness. If I drove you from the war,
Made you distrust its purpose and its faith,
Triumphant over selfishness and wrong,
Oh, leave me with the hope that peace will come,
And vision once again to bless your life.
Behold me as America, taught but half,
Wayward and thoughtless, fighting for a chance;
Denied its ordered youth, thrown into life
But half prepared, so seeking to emerge
Out of a tangled blood, and out of the earth
A creature of the earth that strives to win
A soul, a voice. Behold me thus — forgive!
Take from my life the beauty that you found,
Nothing can kill that beauty if you press
Its blossom to your heart, and with it rise
To nobleness, to duty, give your life
To our America."

"The Lord bless you,
And make his face to shine upon you, and
Be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance
Upon you, give you peace, both now and ever
More. Amen!"

So Elenor's letters ended
The evidence. The afternoon was spent.
The inquest was adjourned till ten o'clock
Next morning. They arose and left the room. . . .
And Merival half-ill went home. Next day
He lounged with books and had the doctor in,
And read his mail, more letters, articles
About the inquest, Elenor. And from France
A little package came. And here at last
Is Elenor Murray's diary! Merival turns
And finds the entries true to Barrett Bays;
Some word, a letter too from France which says:
The sender learned the name by tracing out
A number in the diary, heard the news
Of Elenor Murray from the paper at home
In Illinois. And of the diary this:
He got it from a poilu who was struck
By this same diary on the cheek. A slap
That stung him, since the diary had been thrown
By Elenor Murray from the second story.
This poilu, being tipsy, raved and thought
Some challenger had struck him. Roaring so
He's taken in. Some weeks elapse, he meets
Our soldiers from the States, and shows the diary,

And tells the story, has the diary read
By this American, gives up the diary
For certain drinks. And this American
Has sent it to the coroner.

A letter
To Merival from an old maiden aunt,
Who's given her life to teaching, pensioned now
And visiting at Madison, Wisconsin.
Aunt Cynthia writes to Merival and says:
" I know you are fatigued, a little tired
With troubles of the lower plane of life.
Quit thinking of the war and Elenor Murray.
Each soul should use its own divinity
By mastering nature outward and within.
Do this by work or worship, Soul's control,
Philosophy, by one or more or all.
Above them all be free. This is religion,
And all of it. Books, temples, dogmas, rituals
Or forms are details only. By these means
Find God within you, prove that you and God
Are one, not several, justify the ways
Of God to man, to speak the western way.
I wish you could be here while I am here
With Arielle, she is a soul, a woman.
You need a woman in your life, my dear —
I met her in Calcutta five years since,
She and her husband toured the world — and now
She is a widow these two years. I started
Arielle in the wisdom of the East.

That avid mind of hers devours all things.
She is an adept, but she thinks her sense
Of fun and human nature as the source
Of laughter and of tears keep her from being
A mystic, though she uses Hindu thought
And practice for her soul."

"I'd like to send
Some pictures of her, if she'd let me do it:
Arielle with her dogs upon the lawn,
Her arms about their necks. Or Arielle
About her flowers. I've another one,
Arielle on her favorite horse: another,
Arielle by her window, hand extended,
The very soul of rhythm; and another,
Arielle laughing like a rising sun,
No one can laugh as she does. For you see
Her outward soul is love, her inward soul
Is wisdom and that makes her what she is:
A Robin Goodfellow, a Puck, a girl,
A prankish wit, a spirit of bright tears,
A queenly woman, clothed in majesty,
A rapture and a solace, comrade, friend,
A lover of old women such as I;
A mother to young children, for she keeps
A brood of orphans in her little town.
She is a will as disciplined as steel,
Has suffered and grown wise. Her tenderness
Is hidden under words so brief and pure
You cannot sense the tenderness in all

Until you read them over many times.
She is a lady bountiful, who gives
As prodigally as nature, and she asks
No gifts from you, but gets them anyway,
Because all spirits pour themselves to her.
If I were taking for America
A symbol, it would be my Arielle
And not your Elenor Murray."

"Here's her life!
Her father died when she was just a child,
Leaving a modest fortune to a widow,
Arielle's mother, also other children.
After a time the mother went to England
And settled down in Sussex. There the mother
Was married to a scoundrel, mad-man, genius,
Who tyrannized the household, whipped the children.
So Arielle at fourteen ran away.
She pined for her Wisconsin and America.
She went to Madison, or near the place,
And taught school in the country, much the same
As Elenor Murray did.

"Now here is something:
Behold our world, humanity, the groups
Of people into states, communities,
Full up of powers and virtues, aid and light —
Friends, helpers, understanders of the soul.
It may be just the status of enlightment,
But I think there are brothers of the light,

And powers around us; for if Elenor Murray
Half-fails, is broken, here is Arielle
Who with the surer instinct finds the springs
Of health and life. And so, I say, if I
Had daughters, and were dying, leaving them,
I should not fear; for I should know the world
Would care for them and give them everything
They had the strength to take."

"Here's Arielle.
She teaches school and studies — O that wag —
She posts herself in Shakespeare, forms a class
Of women thrice her age and teaches them,
Adds that way to her earnings. Just in time —
Such things are always opportune, a man
Comes by and sees her spirit, says to her
You may read Plato, and she reads and passes
To Kant and Schopenhauer. So it goes
Until by twenty all her brain is seething
With knowledge and with dreams. She is beloved
By all the people of the country-side,
Besought and honored — yet she keeps to self,
Has hardly means enough, since now she sends
Some help to mother who has been despoiled,
Abandoned by the mad-man."

"Then one spring
A paper in Milwaukee gives a prize,
A trip to Europe, to the one who gets
The most subscriptions in a given time —

And Arielle who has so many friends —
Achievement brings achievement, friends bring friends —
Finds rallying support and wins the prize.
Is off to Europe where she meets the man
She married when returned."

"He is a youth
Of beauty and of promise, yet a soul
Who riots in the sunlight, honey of life.
And gets his wings gummed in the poisonous sweet.
And Arielle one morning wakes to find
A horror on her hands: her husband's found
Dead in a house of ill-fame. She is calm
Out of that rhythm, sense of beauty which
Makes her a power, all her deeds a song.
She lays the body under the dancing muses
There in the wondrous library and flings
A purple robe across it, kneels and lays
Her sunny head against it, says a prayer.
She had been constant, loyal even to dreams,
To this wild youth, whose errant ways she knew.
Now don't you see the contrast? I refrain
From judging Elenor Murray, but I say
One thing is beautiful and one is not.
And Arielle is beautiful as a spirit,
And Elenor is somewhat beautiful,
But streaked and mottled, too. Say what you will
Of freedom, nature, body's rights, no less
Honor and constancy are beautiful,
And truth most beautiful. And Arielle

Could kneel beside the body of her dead,
Who had neglected her so constantly,
And say a prayer of thankfulness that she
Had honored him throughout those seven years
Of married life — she prayed so — why, she says
That prayer was worth a thousand stolen raptures
Offered her in the years of life between."

"Now here she was at thirty
Left to a mansion there in Madison.
Her husband lived there; it was life, you know,
For her to meet one of her neighborhood
In Europe, though a stranger until then.
And here is Arielle in her mansion, priestess
Amid her treasures, beauties, for this man
Has left her many thousands, and she lives
Among her books and flowers, rides and walks,
And frolics with her dogs, and entertains." . . .

And as the Coroner folded the letter out
A letter from this Arielle fell, which read:
"We have an aunt in common, Cynthia.
I know her better than you do, I think,
And love her better too. You men go off
With wandering and business, leave these aunts,
And precious kindred to be found by souls
Who are more kindred, maybe. I have heard
Most everything about you, of your youth
Your schooling, shall I say your sorrow too?
Admire your life, have studied Elenor,

As I have had the chance or got the word.
And what your aunt writes in advice I like,
Approve of and commend to you. You see
I leap right over social rules to write,
And speak my mind. So many friends I've made
By searching out and asking. Why delay?
Time slips away like moving clouds, but Life
Says to the wise make haste. Is there a soul
You'd like to know? Then signal it. I light
From every peak a beacon fire, my peaks
Are new found heights of vision, reaching them
I either see a beacon light, or flash
A beacon light. And thus it was I found
Your Cynthia and mine, and now I write.
I have a book to send you, show that way
How much I value your good citizenship,
Your work as coroner. I had the thought
Of coroners as something like horse doctors —
Your aunt says you're as polished as a surgeon.
When I was ripe for Shakespeare some one brought
His books to me; when I was ripe for Kant,
I found him through a friend. I know about you,
I sense you too, and I believe you need
The spiritual uplifting of the Gita.
You haven't read it, have you? No! you haven't.
I wish that Elenor Murray might have read it.
I grieve about that girl, you can't imagine
How much I grieve. Now write me, coroner,
What is your final judgment of the girl."

"I have so many friends who love me, always
New friends come by to give me wisdom — you
Can teach me, I believe, a man like you
So versed in life. You must have learned new things
Exploring in the life of Elenor Murray.
I was about to write you several times.
I loved that girl from all I heard of her.
She must have had some faculty or fault
That thwarted her, and left her, so to speak,
Just looking into promised lands, but never
Possessing or enjoying them — poor girl!
And here she flung her spirit in the war
And wrecked herself — it makes me sorrowful.
I went to Europe through a prize I won,
And saw the notable places — but this girl
Who hungered just as much as I, saw nothing
Or little, gave her time to labor, nursing —
It is most pitiful, if you'll believe me
I've wept about your Eleanor. Write me now
What is your final judgment of the girl?" . . .

So Merival read these letters, fell asleep.
Next day was weaker, had a fever too,
And took to bed at last. He had to fight
Six weeks or more for life. When he was up
And strong enough he called the jury in
And at his house they talked the case and supped.

THE JURY DELIBERATES

The jurymen are seated here and there
In Merival's great library. They smoke,
And drink a little beer or Scotch. Arise
At times to read the evidence taken down,
And typed for reference. Before them lie
Elenor Murray's letters, all the letters
Written to Merival — there's Alma Bell's,
And Miriam Fay's, letters anonymous.
The article of Roberts in the *Dawn,*
That one of Demos, Hogos; a daily file
Of Lowell's *Times* — Lowell has festered now
Some weeks, a felon-finger in a stall.
And where is Barrett Bays? In Kankakee
Where Elenor Murray's ancestor was kept.
The strain and shame had broken him; a fear
Fell on him of a consequence when the coroner
Still kept him with a deputy. He grew wild,
Attacked the deputy, began to wander
And show some several selves. A multiple
Spirit of devils had him. Dr. Burke
Went over him and found him mad.

And now
The jury meet amid a rapid shift
Of changes, mist and cloud. The man is sick
Who administers the country. Has come back
To laud the pact of peace; his auditors

Turn silently away, whole states assemble
To hear and turn away, sometimes to heckle.
And if a mattoid emperor caused the war,
And Elenor Murrays put the emperor down,
The emperor, could he laugh at all, can laugh
To see a country, bent to spend its last
Dollar, its blood to the last drop, having spent
Enough of these, go mad as Barrett Bays.
And like a headless man, seen in a dream,
Go capering in an ecstasy of doubt,
Regret and disillusion. He can laugh
To see the pact, which took the great estate,
Once his and God's, and wrapt it as with snakes
That stung and sucked, rejected in the land
That sent these Elenor Murrays to make free
The world from despotism. See that very land
Crop despotisms — so the jury sees
Convened to end the case of Elenor Murray. . . .

And Rev. Maiworm, juryman, gives his thought
To conquest of the world for Christ, and says
The churches must unite to free the world
From war and sin. Result? Why less and less
Homes like the Murray home, where husband, wife,
Live in dissension. More and more of schools
For Elenor Murrays. Happy marriages
Will be the rule, our Elenors will find
Good husbands, quiet hearths, a competence.
And Isaac Newfeldt said: "You talk pish-posh.
You go about at snipping withered leaves,

And picking blasted petals — take the root,
Get at the soil — you cannot end these wars
Until you solve the feeding problem. Quit
Relying on your magic to make bread
With five loaves broken, raise a bigger crop
Of wheat, and get it to the mouths of men.
And as for sin — what is it? — All of sin
Lies in the customs, comes from how you view
The bread and butter matter; all your gods
And sons of God are guardians of the status
Of business and of money; sin a thing
Which contradicts, or threatens banks and wharves.
And as for that your churches now control
As much as human nature can digest
A dominance like that. And what's the state
Of things in Christendom? Why, wars, and want
And many Elenor Murrays. Tyrannies
Are like as pea and pea; you shall not drink,
Or read, or talk, or trade, are from one pod.
What would I do? Why, socialize the world,
Then leave men free to live or die, let nature
Go decimating as she will, and weed
The worthless with disease or alcohol —
You won't see much of that, however, if
You socialize the world."

"And David Barrow
Spoke up and said: "No ism is enough.
The question is, Is life worth living, good
Or bad? If bad, I think that Elenor Murray had

As good a life as any. Here we've sat
These weeks and heard these stories — nothing new;
And as to waste, our time is wasted here,
If there were better things to do; and yet
Perhaps there is no better. I've enjoyed
This work, association. Well, you're told
To judge not, and that means to judge not man;
You are not told to judge not God. And so
I judge Him. And again your Elenor Murrays,
Your human being cannot will his way,
But God's omnipotent, and where He fails
He should be censured. Why does He allow
A world like this, and suffer earthquakes, storms,
The sinking of *Titanics,* cancers? Why
Suffer these wars, this war? — Talk of the riffles
That flowed from Elenor Murray — here's a wave
Of tidal power, stirred by a greedy coot
Who called himself an emperor! And look
Our land, America, is ruined, slopped
For good, or for our lives with filth and stench;
So that to live here takes what strength you have,
None left for living, as a man should live.
And this America once free and fair
Is now the hatefulest, commonest group of men,
Women and children in the Occident.
What's life here now? Why, boredom, nothing else. . . .
Why pity Elenor Murray? Gottlieb Gerald
Told of her home life; it was good enough,
Average American, or better. Schools
She had in plenty, what would she have done

With courses to the end in music, art?
She was not happy. Elenor had a brain,
And brains and happiness are at enmity.
And if the world goes on, some thousand years,
The race as much advanced beyond us now
In feeling, thought, as we are now beyond
Pinthecanthropus, say, why, all will see
What I see now;— 'twere better if the race
Had never risen. All analogies
Of nature show that death of man is death.
He plants his seed and dies, the resurrection
Is not the man, but is the child that grows
From sperm he sows. The grain of wheat that sprouts
Is not the stalk that bore it. Now suppose
We get the secret in a thousand years,
Can prove that death's the end, analogies
Put by with amber, frogs' legs — tell me then
What opiate will still the shrieks of men?
But some of us know now, and I am one.
There is no heaven for me; and as for those
Who make a heaven to get out of this —
You gentlemen who call life good, the world
The work of God's perfection; yet invent
A heaven to rest in from this world of woe —
You do not wish to go there; and resort
To cures and Christian Science to stay here!
Which shows you are not sure. And thus we have
Your Christian saying at heart that life is bad,
And heaven is good, but not so good and sure
That you will hurry to it. Why, I'll prove

The Christian pessimist, as well as I.
He says life is so bad it has no meaning,
Unless there be a future; and I say
Life's bad, and if no future, then is worse.
And as it has no future, is a hell.
This girl was soaked in opiates to the last.
Religion, love for Barrett Bays, believed
That God is love. Love is a word to me
That has no meaning but in terms of man.
And if a man cause war, or suffer war,
When he could stop it, do we say he loves?
Why call God love who can prevent a war?
To chasten us, to better, purge our sins?
Well, if it be then we are bettered, purged
When William Hohenzollern goes to war
And makes the whole world crazy."

"Understand
I do not mock, I pity man and life.
No man has sat here who has suffered more,
Seeing the life of Elenor Murray, through
Her life beholding life, our country's life.
I pity man and life. I curse the scheme
Which wakes the senseless clay to lips that bleed,
And eyes that weep, and hearts that agonize,
Then in an instant make them clay again!
And for it all no reason, that the reason
Can bring to light to stand the light."

"And yet
I'd make life better, food and shelter better
And wider happiness, and fuller love.
We're travelers on a ship that has no bourne
But rocks, for us. On such a ship 'twere wise
To have the daily comforts, foolish course
To neither eat, nor sleep, keep warm, nor sing.
But only walk the rainy deck and wait.
The little opiates of happiness
Would make the sailing better, though we know
The trip is nowhere and the rocks will sink
The portless steamer."

"Is it portless?" asked
Llewellyn George, "you're leaping to a thought,
And overlook a world of intimations,
And hints of truth. I grant you take this race
That lives to-day, and make the world a boat
There is no port for us as human lives
In this our life. But look, you see the race
Has climbed, a mountain trail, and looks below
From certain heights to-day at man the beast.
We scan a half a million years of man
From caves to temples, gestures, beacon fires
To wireless. Call that mechanical,
And power developed over tools. But here
Is mystery beyond these.— What of powers,
Devotions, aspirations, sacred flame
Which masters nature, worships life, defies
Death to obstruct it, hungers for the right,

The truth, hates wrong, and by that passion wills
All art, all beauty, goodness, and creates
Those living waters of increasing life
By which man lives, and has to-day the means
Of fuller living. Here's a realm of richness,
Beyond and separate from material things,
Your aeroplanes or conquests. Now I put
This question to you, David Barrow, what
But God who is and has some end for life,
And gives it meaning, though we see it not —
What is it in the heart of man which lifts,
Sustains him to the truth, the harmony,
The beauty say of loyalty, or truth
Or art, or science? lighting lamps for men
To walk by, men who hate the lamps, the hand
That lights? What is this spirit, but the spirit
Of Something which moves through us, to an end,
And by its constancy in man made constant
Proclaims an end? There's Bruno, Socrates,
There's Washington who might have lost his life,
Why do these men cling to the vision, hope?
When neither poverty, nor jeers, nor flames,
Nor cups of poison stay? Who say thereby
That death is nothing, but this life of ours,
Which can be shaped to truth and harmony,
And rising flame of spirit, giving light,
Is everything worth while, must be lived so
And if not lived so, then there's death indeed,
By turning from the voice that says that man
Must still aspire. And why aspire if death

Ends us, the scheme? And all this realm of spirit,
Of love for truth and beauty, is the play
Of shadows on the tomb?"

"Now take this girl:
She knew before she sailed to France, this man,
This Barrett Bays was mad about her — knew
She could stay here and have him, live with him,
And thus achieve a happiness. And she knew
To leave him was to make a chance to lose him.
But then you say she knew he'd tire of her,
And left for France. And still that happiness
Before he tired would be hers. You see
This spirit I'd delineate working here:
To sacrifice and by the sacrifice
Rise to a bigger spirit, make it truer;
Then bring that truer spirit to her love
For Barrett Bays, and not just loll and slop
In love to-day. Why does she wish to give
A finer spirit to this Barrett Bays?
And to that end take life in hand? It's this:
My Something, God at work. You say it's woman
In sublimate of passion — call it that.
Why sublimate a passion? All her life
This girl aspires — you think to win a man?
But win a man with what? With finest self
Make this her contribution to these riches,
Which Bruno and the others filled so full.
You see this Something going on, but races
Come up, express themselves and pass away;

But yet this Something manifests itself
Through souls like Elenor Murray's — fills her life
With fuller meanings, maybe at the last
This Something will reveal itself so clear
That men like David Barrow can perceive.
And Love, this spirit, twin of Death, you see
Love slays this girl, but Love remains to slay,
Lift up, drive on and slay. I call Death twin
Of Love, and why? Because two things alone
Make what we are and live, first Love the flame,
And Death the cap that snuffs it. Is it bread
That keeps us dancing, skating like these bugs
That play criss-cross on evening waters? — no!
It's bread to get more life to give more love,
Bring to some heart a fuller life, receive
A fuller life for having given life.
This force of love may look demonical.
It tears, destroys, and crushes, chokes and kills,
Is always stretching hands to Death its twin.
And yet it is creation and creates,
Feeds roses, jonquils, columbines, gardenias,
As well as thistles, cockle burrs and thorns.
This is the force to which the girl's alert,
And sensitive, is shaken by its power,
Driven, uplifted, purified; a doll
Of paper dancing on magnetic plates;
And by that passion lusts for Death himself,
For union with another, sacrifice,
Beauty, and she aspires and toils, and turns
To God, the symptom always of this nature.

THE JURY DELIBERATES

My fellow-jurymen, you'll never see,
Or learn so well about another soul
That had this Love force deeper in her flesh,
Her spirit, suffered more. Why do we suffer?
What is this love force? 'Tis the child of blood
Of madness, as this Elenor is the seed
Of that old grandma, who was mad, and cousin
Of Taylor who did murder. What is this
But human spirit flamed and subtleized
Until it is a poison and a food;
A madness but a clearest sanity;
A vision and a blindness, all as if
When nature goes so far, refines so much
Her balance has been broken, if the Something
Makes not a genius or a giant soul.
And so we suffer. But why do we suffer?
Well, not as Barrow said, that life is bad;
A failure and a fraud. Not suffering
That points to dust, defeat, is painfulest;
But suffering that points to skies and realms
Above us, whence we came, or where we go,
That suffering is most poignant, as it is
Significant as well, and rapturous too.
The pain that thrills us for the singing Flame
Of Love, the force creative, that's the pain!
And those must suffer most to whom the sounds
Of music or of words, or scents, or scenes
Recall lost realms. No soul can understand
Music or words in whom there is not stirred
A recollection — that is genius too:

A memory, and reliving hours we lived
Before we looked upon this world of man." . . .

Then Winthrop Marion said: "I like your talk,
Llewellyn George, but still what killed the girl?
What was the cause of death of Elenor Murray?
She died from syncope, that's clear enough.
The doctors tell us that in syncope
The victim should be laid down, not held up.
And Barrett Bays, the bungler, held her up
When she was stricken — like the man, I think!
Well, Coroner, suppose we make a verdict,
And say we find that had this Barrett Bays
Sustained this Elenor Murray in the war,
And in her life, with friendship, and with faith
She had not died. Suppose we further find
That when he took her, held her in his arms
When she had syncope, he was dull or crazed,
And missed a chance to save her. We could find
That had he laid her down when she was stricken
She might have lived — I knew that much myself.
And we could find that had he never driven
This woman from his arms, but kept her there,
Before said day of August 7th, no doubt
She had not died on August 7th. In short,
He held her up, and should have laid her down,
And drove her from him when she needed arms
To hold her up. And so we find her death
Was due to Barrett Bays — we censure him,
Would hold him to the courts — that cannot be —

And so we hold him up for memory
Contemptuous, and say his bitter words
Brought on the syncope, so long prepared
By what he did. We write his course unfeeling,
Weak, selfish, petty, flowing from the craze
Of sexual jealousy, made worse by war,
And universal madness, erethism
Of hellish war. And, gentlemen, one thing:
Paul Robert's article in the *Dawn* suggests
Some things I credit, knowing them. We get
Our notions of uncleanness from the Jews,
The Pentateuch. There are no women here,
And I can talk; — you know the ancient Jews
Deemed sex unclean, and only to be touched
At sufferance of Jehovah; birth unclean,
A mother needing purification after
Her hour of giving birth. You know their laws
Concerning adultery. Well, they've tainted us
In spite of Greece. Now look at Elenor Murray:
What if she went with Gregory Wenner. Hell!
Did that contaminate her, change her flesh,
Or change her spirit? All this evidence
Shows that it did not. But it changed this man,
Because his mind was slime where snakes could breed.
But now what do we see? That woman is
Essential genius, man just mechanism
Of conscious thought and strength. This Elenor
Is wiser, being nature, than this man,
And lives a life that puts this Barrett Bays
To shame and laughter. Look at her: She's brave,

Devoted, loyal, true and dutiful,
She's will to life, and through it senses God,
And seeks to serve the cosmic soul. I think
This jury should start now to raise a fund
To erect a statue of her in the park
To keep her name and labors fresh in mind
To those who shall come after."

"And I'll sign
A verdict in these words, but understand
Such things are *Coram non judice;* still
We can chip in our money, start the fund
To build this monument."

Ritter interrupted.
The banker said: "I'll start it with a hundred,"
And so the fund was started.

Marion
Resumed to speak of riffles: "In Chicago
There's less than half the people speaking English,
The rest is Babel: Germans, Russians, Poles
And all the tongues, much rippling going on,
And if we couldn't trace the riffles out
From Elenor Murray, we must give this up.
One thing is sure: Look out for England, if
America shall grow a separate soul.
You may have congresses, and presidents,
These states, but if America is a realm
Of tribute as to thought, America

Is just a province. And it's past the time
When we should be ourselves, we've wasted time,
And grafted alien things upon our bole.
A Domesday of the minds that think and know
In our America would give us hope,
We have them in abundance. What I hate
Is that crude Demos which shouts down the minds,
Outvotes them, takes these silly lies that move
The populace and makes them into laws,
And makes a village of a great republic."

And Merival listened as the jurymen
Philosophied the case of Elenor Murray,
And life at large. And having listened spoke:
" I like the words Llewellyn George has said.
Love is a sea which wrecks and sinks our craft,
But re-creates the hands that build again;
And like a tidal wave which sponges out
An island or a city, lifts and leaves
Fresh seeds and forms of beauty on the peaks.
The whinchat in the mud upon its claws,
Storm driven from its course to sea, brings life
Of animal and plant to virgin shores,
And islands strange and new. These happenings
Of Elenor Murray carry beauty forth,
Unhurt amid the storm-cloud, darkness, fire,
To lives and eras. And our country too,
So ruined and so weltering, like a ball
Of mud made in a missile by a god
May bear, no less, a pearl at core, a truth,

A liberty, a genius, beauty,— thrown
In mischief by the god, and staining walls
Of this our temple; in a day to be
Dried up, cracks open, and the pearl appears
To be set in a precious time beyond
Our time and vision. This is what I mean:
Call Elenor egoist, and make her work,
And life the means of rich return to her
In exaltation, pride; — a missile of mud,
It carries still the pearl of her, the seed
Of finer spirits. We must open eyes
To see inside the mud-ball. If it be
We conquered slavery of the negro through,
Because of economic forces, yet
We conquered it. Trade, cotton, were the mud
Upon the whinchat's claws containing seeds
Of liberties to be, and carried forth
In mid seas of the future to sunny isles,
More blest than ours. And as for this, you know
The English blotted slavery from their books
And left their books unbalanced in point of cash,
But balanced richly in a manhood gain.
I warn you, David Barrow, pessimist,
Against a general slur on life and man.
Deride the Christian ethic, if you choose,
You must retain its word of benevolence;
Or better, you must honor man, whose heart
Leaps up to its benevolence, from whose heart
The Christian doctrine of benevolence
Did issue to this world. If Christian doctrine

Be man-made, not a miracle, as it is
All man-made, still it's out of generous fire
Of human spirit; that's the thing divine. . . .
Now how is Elenor Murray wonderful
To me viewed through this mass of evidence?
Why, as the soul maternal, out of which
All goodness, beauty, and benevolence,
All aspiration, sacrifice, all death
For truth and liberty blesses life of us.
This soul maternal, passion to create
New life and guide it into happiness,
Is Mother Mary of all tenderness,
All charity, all vision, rises up
From its obscurity and primal force
Of romance, passion and the child, to realms,
Democracies, republics; never flags
To make them brighter, freer, so to spread
Its ecstasy to all, and take in turn
Redoubled ecstasy! The tragedy
Is that this Elenor for her mother gift
Is cursed and tortured, sent a wanderer;
And in her death must find much clinging mud
Around the pearl of her. If that be mud,
Which we have heard, around her, is it mud
That weights the soul of America, the pure
Dream of our founders? Larger Athens, where
All things should be heard gladly and considered,
And men should grow, be forced to grow, because
Not driven or restrained by usages,
Or laws of mad majorities, but left

At their own peril to work out their lives. . . .
Well, gentlemen, I'll tell you what I've learned.
What is a man or woman but a sperm
Accreted into largeness? Still a sperm
In likeness, being brain and spinal cord,
Fed by the glands, the thyroid and the rest,
Whose secrets we are ignorant of. We know
That when they fail our minds fail. But the glands
Are visible and clear: but in us whirl
Emotions; fear, disgust, murder or wrath,
Traced back to animals as moods of flight
Repulsion, curiosity, all the rest.
Now what are these but levers of our machine?
Elenor Murray teaches this to me:
Build up a science of these levers, learn
To handle fear, disgust, anger, wonder.
They teach us physiology; who teaches
The use of instincts and emotions, powers?
All learning may be that, but what is that?
Why just a spread of food, where after nibbling
You learn what you can eat, and what is good
For you to eat. You'll see a different world
When this philosophy of levers rules." . . .

Then Merival tacked round and said: "I'll show
The riffles in my life from Elenor Murray:
The politicians give me notice now
I cannot be the coroner again.
I didn't want to be, but I had planned
To go to Congress, and they say to that

THE VERDICT

We do not want you. So my circle turns,
And riffles back to breeding better hogs,
And finer cattle. Here's the verdict, sign
Your names, and I'll return it to the clerk.

THE VERDICT

"An inquisition taken for the people
Of the State of Illinois here at LeRoy,
County aforesaid, on the 7th of August,
Anno Domini, nineteen hundred nineteen,
Before me, William Merival, coroner
For the said County, viewing here the body
Of Elenor Murray lying dead, upon
The oath of six good lawful men, the same
Of the said County, being duly sworn
To inquire for the said people into all
The circumstances of her death, the said
Elenor Murray, and by whom the same
Was brought about, and in what manner, when,
And where she came to death, do say upon
Their oaths, that Elenor Murray lying dead
In the office of the coroner at LeRoy
Came to her death on August 7th aforesaid
Upon the east shore of the Illinois River
A mile above Starved Rock, from syncope,
While in the company of Barrett Bays,
Who held her in his arms when she was seized,

And should have laid her down when she was seized
To give her heart a chance to resume its beat."

The jury signed the verdict and arose
And said good-night to Merival, went their way.
Next day the coroner went to Madison
To look on Arielle, who had written him.